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In This Issue

Dungeon

"He looks down the long flight of quartz steps to where his court disports itself, dancing with such delicacy and whispering grace that it might be a court of ghosts. Mentally he debates moral issues and in itself this activity divides him from the great majority of his subjects, for these people are not human."

Elric of Melniboné
Michael Moorcock

Editorial **10**

Letters **12**

Map of Mystery **82**

Rob Lazzeretti
Chaotic players getting into trouble in the big city back alleys? *Dungeon's* got you covered.

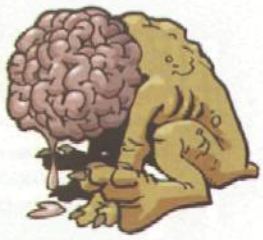
Dragon Hunters **16**

Peter Zollers
Fort Akor has come under attack by a dragon, but when the PCs seek out the beast in the surrounding jungle they discover the dragon may be the least of the fort's troubles. A D&D adventure for 7th-level PCs.

The Demonskar Legacy **44**

Tito Leati
The Shackled City Adventure Path continues! After a riot erupts in the streets of Cauldron, the PCs must track down a missing paladin before the mob tears the city apart. A D&D Adventure Path adventure for 8th-level PCs.

On the Cover: *Alek Tercival, a fearless paladin, has seen better days. Chances are he ain't surviving the* Demonskar Legacy, *fourth installment in Dungeon's new Adventure Path. Will your PCs manage any better? Cover artist Matt Cavotta votes a resounding "no!"*



POLYHEDRON v.163

First Watch **86**

Global Positioning **70**

PDF: The Future of RPGs? **78**

M Jason Parent

The d20 Revolution sparked a revolution of its own that may very well outlive our favorite system. Our overview provides a starting point to explore the wealth of d20 products available exclusively online.

RPGA Player Rewards: Campaign Card Bible **100**

Don't be caught off guard at an RPGA event with this handy guide to the Network's flashy new premiums!

The LIVING GREYHAWK Journal: Paladins of Greyhawk **106**

Gary Holian

LIVING GREYHAWK Gazetteer co-author Gary Holian presents details on the paladins of seven gods and their unique feats.

November 2003
Vol. XVII, No. 8
Issue 104

POLYHEDRON: *Guns kill people. If we were trapped in the Matrix, we'd order up a slew of RPG products to help us pass the time. (Actually, I think we'd spend a great deal of time with the Lady in Red program).* Mutants & Masterminds *impresario Ramón Pérez shows us what it's like to take the red pill.*

My First Time

I still remember my first experience with *Dungeon Magazine*. I'd been running a Dungeons & Dragons campaign for a little over a year, having started with the brand new second edition of my favorite roleplaying game. I'd been playing in the World of Greyhawk ever since I first stumbled upon that boxed set in 1986, but the new version of the game convinced me to look at TSR's other setting offerings, which I suspected might fit the new game a little better (it took me years to get over the loss of monks and barbarians, but I'm all better now). We settled on a Dragonlance campaign in which I'd set the players against dungeons and challenges of my own design. After a year of hard campaigning, two things became clear.

1) I didn't really like Dragonlance.

2) There was just no way I could keep up with designing adventures every single week.

I solved the first problem by making the world my own, using little more than the setting's poster map and slowly but surely bringing more "Greyhawk" elements into the weekly game. I preferred site-based dungeon crawls like *Against the Giants* to the story-based quasi-novels TSR was putting out at the time, so I dusted off the classics and kicked the campaign into high gear.

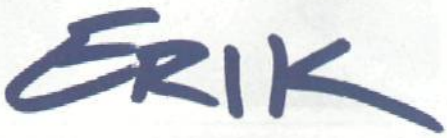
But even running great old adventures like *Glacial Rift of the Frost Giant Jarl* and *Hidden Shrine of Tamoachan* required a fair bit of number crunching to bring the rules up to date, and I just didn't have the time. Enter *Dungeon Magazine*. I've loved mind flayers since the beginning, so Paul Jacquays' painting of a noble illithid on the cover of *Dungeon* #24 sucked me right in. Within the magazine, I discovered a great Underdark adventure called "Thunder Under Needlespire," which included mind flayers, rakshasa, kuo-toas, a drow, and a beholder. Let's just say that "staple" creatures like that hadn't appeared for some time in TSR's stand-alone adventure modules, and I was thrilled to find a no-effort ready-to-play adventure with cool maps, cool art, and cooler encounters.

The way I see it, that's our job here at *Dungeon Magazine*. You're busy folks, who don't always have the time to crunch a bunch of numbers, draw a bunch of maps, and think up devious plots and even more devious villains to vex your players. We do. We're ready, willing, and able to help out your D&D campaigns.

The last year's seen a lot of changes in these pages. We added *Polyhedron*, started the Shackled City Adventure Path, went monthly, launched a subscriber-only section, and killed that same section within months of its first appearance. Former Editor-in-Chief Chris Thomasson is now over running our partner *Dragon Magazine*, and I'm now in charge of the whole shebang. In July, we hired Associate Editor James Jacobs, whose sharp eye for detail and impressive writing skills are already making a huge impact on the magazine. I was surprised to notice that James wrote "Thunder Under Needlespire," the first *Dungeon* adventure I ever played (and he did it at age 17—take that, Mary Shelley!), and I'm thrilled to have him on our staff.

At age 17, James wrote an adventure I ran in my group when I was 15. At the same time, 17-year-old Art Director Sean Glenn was designing logos for corporations in his *Cyberpunk* campaign. It's not too much of a stretch to say our entire staff has been training for the job of putting this magazine together for our entire adult lives. And we've got some big plans in store.

Every issue is someone's first. For me, it was "Thunder Under Needlespire." My job as editor-in-chief is to treat every adventure as if it's *your* first, and keep you coming back for that same quality month after month. I look forward to the challenge!



Erik Mona
dungeon@paizo.com

PRISON MAIL

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I Love Gamebooks!

It was a real thrill to open issue 101 of *Dungeon* and see a copy of *The Warlock of Firetop Mountain* on the editorial page! It could definitely be said that adventure gamebooks sparked my interest in roleplaying (as well as in reading, for that matter), and I still have an inordinate fondness for them—hence the hours of my life now spent compiling information on them at www.gamebooks.org.

It's definitely exciting to see *Fighting Fantasy* back in print, and I'm greatly looking forward to Mongoose Publishing's forthcoming d20 adaptation of Joe Dever's wonderful *Lone Wolf* gamebooks. I'm also now hoping that somebody will put out a really high-quality d20 solitaire adventure. A few companies have made tentative steps in that direction, but I haven't seen a hit yet. I'm still waiting for a chance to repeat the thrill of my first fight with a rust monster in the D&D Basic Set's introductory solo adventure—one of the early highlights of my gaming career.

Demian
Via Email

Anyone else want to see a solo adventure?

Where's my Kris knife?

Erik's words in the August editorial struck a chord with me and compelled me to write in and relay my story. My love of roleplaying games was inspired by adventure gamebooks...and one *Fighting Fantasy* book in particular.

It was back in 1984. I was 14 years old and traveling with my dad to Rothenburg, a very romantic Medieval city in southern Germany. I stumbled upon a musty bookshop, and when I rummaged through the bargain table for a nice bedtime story, my grubby little hands incidentally closed around something flashing a venomous green from under a stack of otherwise uninteresting fiction. Turning it around to reveal a gruesome cover sporting a haunted house, I was instantly hooked: *House of Hell*. Jumpin' bajeemers, gotta have it!

Until this point, I had not read a genuine fantasy novel (with the exception of *The Hobbit*), but I *loved* haunted houses. As I read the back, it went on to say that *I* was to be the hero! Now how cool is that? Suffice it to say, as bamboozled as I was about the concept at first (what do you mean, I "must not read the entries in their proper order"?), the story swallowed me there and then.

As darkness crept across the antique walls and crooked towers of Rothenburg, I was lost to the world, spending hours on end, traipsing fearfully through the corridors of that infernal mansion. Countless times I died of fear or in the rotting embrace of a ghoul, but I adored the book. As a matter of fact, I fell in love with the House of Hell. I drew floorplans as faithfully as possible, wrote alternative scenarios, laboriously pieced together the genealogy of the inhabitants, pestered my Latin teacher about the names of all those demons and devils, and so on. To put it briefly, I had truly entered the realms of geekdom.

From then on, I hunted down each and every gamebook I could find. Eventually, I came across the red *Dungeons & Dragons* box, and finally played in my very first roleplaying game. The rest, as they say, is history.

Close to 20 years have passed since then, and I have not touched an adventure gamebook in some time. But Erik's words reawakened a dark memory buried deep within me: that silent old house still sits on the hill, full of mysteries unsolved and stories untold. At the time I write this, a thunderstorm rages outside my window, and in between the thunderclaps, I hear a whisper beckoning me to come home...

Ivo Mersiowsky
Via Email

All Hail the Firebringer!

As a constant reader, I wanted to give my own opinion on the content in *Dungeon*. I just read issue #101, and I must say that "Prison of the Firebringer" was an unbelievable adventure! Certainly one of the best you've put out in recent months. I think this has been a strong suit of the magazine recently, putting out high quality material. Each of your adventures is always full of great detail, and I never get the sense that shoddy material makes it into print.

That said, I would rather get more variety per issue. Having one large adventure take up the entire magazine makes buying *Dungeon* an all-or-nothing experience. I subscribe to *Dragon* because I feel confident that

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Submissions: Interested in writing for the magazine? Download our submission guidelines by visiting the *Dungeon* homepage at www.paizo.com/dungeon.

every month I will find something useful to me; I don't have that feeling with *Dungeon*, so I don't subscribe.

David Farrell
Via Email

Death to the Sub Section!

I recently switched from buying your magazine in the store to getting it in my mailbox by subscription. I made the switch because I didn't want to miss any issues (you do a great job!), and I can't always make it to the store at the right time to catch the new issue.

Recently, I noticed that you have decided to discontinue the "subscribers only" section. I think you've made a good choice in listening to your "countertop customers" by now offering the same quality magazine to everyone. I look forward to many more issues in the mail, and I'm sure you will continue to provide top-notch entertainment.

Can we expect any more epic-level adventures soon? I think James Wyatt's "The Storm Lord's Keep" in issue #93 was superb, and I would love to see more challenges for my high-level group. Maybe Mr. Wyatt can help?

Brian Fielding
Via Email

As the Adventure Path chugs along, the levels keep getting higher and higher. While that series will end before bursting into the realm of the truly Epic, don't be surprised to see a whole host of very high-level nasties walking the streets of Cauldron before too long.

We don't currently have any epic-level adventures planned for the near future, but we're certainly willing to entertain proposals from would-be authors. Care to give it a shot, Brian?

Color Makes it Better

Thanks for producing such a relevant, high-quality, and entirely useable magazine. I purchased *Dungeon* sporadically during its first few years, and found its scope to be wider than my admittedly narrow gaming tastes at the time. I decided that great material like "The Elephants' Graveyard," "The Glass House," and "The Moor-Tomb Map" were uncommon gems buried under useless paladin solo adventures and Spelljammer goofiness. *Dungeon's* attempt to support numerous platforms, hampered by its apparently shallow submission pool, steered my preference toward stand-alone published modules.

Many years later I stumbled upon issue #84, with its striking cover art and cartography, adventure-scaling sidebars, and welcome content. I subscribed instantly. Stylistically, *Dungeon* is now an exciting success. I never found enjoyment casually flipping through an old black-and-white issue the way I do now with your full colorization and streamlining. Also, the meat of the book, its adventures, are highly inventive yet loyal to D&D's classic "sword and sorcery" premise. "Make it Big," "Beast of Burden," and "Sinkhole" come to mind. The Adventure Path series is a great source of continuity between issues, but the individual episodes can easilly serve as stand-alone scenarios. The adventures in the last seven issues have been evenly spread across low-, mid-, and high-level ranges: seven scenarios for levels 1–5, eight scenarios for levels 6–11, and six scenarios for levels 12+. I now find that almost every adventure is worthwhile to read or play.

Michael D'Orazio
Massachusetts, USA

Low-Level Heaven

I'm a relatively new *Dungeon* reader, having started collecting it with issue #99. I've noticed that the letters you print tend to be quite heated affairs, and it's obvious that your readers have very clear ideas on what should be in the magazine. That's usually the sign of a healthy magazine; it makes being an editor somewhat difficult, of course, but then you can't have everything!

There was one point in Kurt Stoffer's letter in issue #102, though, that I'd like to address. The whole reason I started buying *Dungeon* was for more low-level adventures, and I've had to wait four issues to get one!

I've just started running a D&D game at the school where I teach, and much as I'd like to develop my own campaigns and adventures, I just don't have the time to do so. Issue #102's "Cry Wolf" is perfect for my needs and I'm looking forward to running it for my players in the new term. While I understand that most players play higher-level characters, the thought of having to wait even longer for quality low-level adventures is, quite frankly, horrifying.

Please remember that there are always new players out there and they need to start somewhere. Low-level adventures like "Cry Wolf" are just as valuable as higher-level ones. While I enjoy reading all the content in *Dungeon*, it's nice to finally have something that I can *use!*

Jeremy Daw
Southport, England

Some of my favorite "classic" adventures were low-level introductory modules, so I definitely have a soft spot in my DM's heart for low-level adventures. Trouble is, we're currently far from overflowing with great low-level submissions. You hear that, authors? Send in some epic-level stuff for Brian and some low-level stuff for Jeremy, and it sounds like we're all set!

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DRAGON HUNTERS

BY PETER ZOLLERS

ARTWORK BY LOCKE of UDON AND RICHARD SARDINHA
CARTOGRAPHY BY ROBERT LAZZARETTI

"Dragon Hunters" is a DUNGEONS & DRAGONS adventure for four 7th-level player characters (PCs). This adventure is best suited to a party of predominantly good-aligned PCs that includes at least one spellcaster. Characters with good wilderness and diplomatic skills should be very useful in bringing the adventure to a successful conclusion. The adventure can be adjusted for PCs from 5th level to 9th level by using the suggestions found in the "Scaling the Adventure" sidebar.

This adventure takes place in the Myhral Jungle, a largely unexplored coastal rainforest; you can substitute a similar large jungle region in your campaign with ease. In the WORLD OF GREYHAWK, the adventure could take place in the Amedio Jungle; in the FORGOTTEN REALMS, it could occur in Chult. Likewise, the name and location of Prince Henri d'Aventhal's homeland should be tailored to your campaign.

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

After the untimely wartime death of his father, Prince Henri d'Aventhal attempted a coup to seize power from his mother, the queen. The prince counted upon the common people to support him, but they were sick of his father's constant warmongering and chose to back his mother. Agents of the queen thwarted the coup, arrested the prince and his cohorts, and exiled the lot to the southern Myhral Jungle. The royal family kept the affair secret from the public, claiming that the prince had left the kingdom to seek fortune in a distant land.

The queen intended for her son to die in exile, killed by the treacherous, inhuman inhabitants of the deep jungle. Instead, a community of wild elves and centaurs helped Prince Henri and his soldiers survive the dangers of the jungle, hoping only for a bit of cultural exchange in return.

Unfortunately for them, Prince Henri had become obsessed with the desire to return home to reclaim his kingdom. He promised to teach the centaurs and elves the skills of armor and weaponsmithing in exchange for assistance in constructing a massive coastal fort to serve as a base for his exiled faction. The elves and centaurs agreed, and within months they worked with the prince's allies to complete Fort Akor, named after Henri's beloved father. The fort completed, Prince Henri showed his true colors, ordering his men to round up the elves and centaurs and imprison them in a labor camp. The elves fell quickly to his soldiers, but the centaurs fought back with suprising ferocity. Nonetheless, the prince's better-trained and better-equipped soldiers won the day, forcing the surviving centaurs to flee into the jungle to avoid enslavement.

Prince Henri, worried that the centaurs would return in greater numbers, forced the enslaved elves to construct a wooden palisade around the buildings. He then ordered his prisoners to collect wood for a fleet of ships that will carry his soldiers back home to reclaim his birthright. Work on the fleet had barely begun, however, when Fort Akor came under attack by a huge reptilian creature the likes of which Prince Henri and his soldiers had never before encountered. The beast assaulted the Fort again and again with brutal ferocity, and the soldiers of Fort Akor became convinced that the "dragon" would be their doom.

Unknown to the prince and his followers, the creature threatening Fort Akor is not a dragon. It is a tyrannosaurus rex, driven to a blind rage by the recent disappearance of its hatchling.

After their betrayal, the few surviving centaurs took refuge in a ruined ziggurat called the Grand Temple. The eldest centaur, Cerra, urged her fellows to retreat further into the safety of the jungle and attempt to start anew. Her son, an enraged young bard named Lucien, preferred to take immediate vengeance, inflaming the rage of his brethren and wresting control of the band from his mother.

Lucien began by allying the surviving centaurs with the Renders, a tribe of bestial quaggoths, offering the feral creatures treasures plundered from the Grand Temple. Cerra was horrified by the alliance with traditional tribal enemies, but knew that the Renders could provide the numbers needed to successfully siege Fort Akor. But to get into the fort, Lucien needed to bring down the wooden palisades—enter the tyrannosaurus rex.

Lucien and the other young centaurs slipped into the dinosaur's nest while it was away hunting and killed its newborn hatchling. The centaurs dragged the baby's corpse to the fort and buried it near the palisade under the cover of darkness and magical silence. The tyrannosaur followed the scent of her hatchling to the fort later that night, and fought back when the startled soldiers attacked.

So far, Lucien's plan has met with great success. The tyrannosaur has caused heavy damage to Fort Akor, and the prince's soldiers are beginning to panic.

ADVENTURE SYNOPSIS

The PCs travel to Fort Akor, where they learn that the fort has been under attack by a dragon. Prince Henri asks the PCs to slay the dragon attacking his fort before it causes further damage. If

the PCs investigate the fort before setting out after the tyrannosaur, they may discover the hidden corpse of its hatchling. They may also discover the truth behind the fort's dark history.

Tracking the "dragon" to its lair and slaying it for Prince Henri forces the characters into a conflict with Lucien and his minions. Discovering the truth of the prince's conflict with the jungle natives might lead to an alliance with the elves and centaurs. The perfect solution might involve returning the hatchling corpse to its mother, removing Lucien from power, and seeing Prince Henri deposed for his crimes.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

Getting the heroes involved in the adventure involves contriving a reason why they might be traveling along the coastline of the Myhral Jungle (or other suitable locale from your campaign). If you have difficulty justifying why your characters might be in the area, consider some of the following options:

- The PCs have been sent to the Myhral to retrieve a rare plant or animal for a plant collector, herbalist, or wizard seeking material components.
- On a previous adventure, the PCs learned of the Grand Temple and have decided to seek out its riches, perhaps with the help of a crude map that led them to the region.
- Although she has not forgiven him for the attempted coup, Prince Henri's mother still harbors some love for her son. She may send an agent to secretly hire the PCs to find out if her son still lives, and if he can be redeemed. Such a mission should be kept quiet, since the populace bears no love for the deposed prince.

PART I: ARRIVAL AT FORT AKOR

As the party travels along the cost, their vessel is approached by a primitive longboat crewed by six light-skinned human soldiers clothed in the garb of a distant northern kingdom. The crewmembers bear no arms or armor, although several longswords and suits of chainmail litter the longboat's deck. The longboat itself lists badly, and seems to be only partially completed. A woman in the bow stands to address the PCs and anyone with them.

> "In the name of the honorable Prince Henri d'Aventhal, ruler of Fort Akor, I request a moment of your time. Our fort has come under attack by a vicious dragon, and I fear that before long, it shall fall. I ask for aid in defending the fort or, if you cannot help, permission to accompany you to your destination where I may find someone who can."

A successful Bardic Knowledge or Knowledge (nobility and royalty) check (DC 20) indicates that the PC has heard of Prince Henri, and knows that he recently left his home to seek his fortunes elsewhere. If the check result exceeds DC 30, the PC knows that the prince was exiled after a failed coup attempt.

If questioned about the prince's exile, the woman, Lieutenant Anna Samos, sighs and admits that while the prince and his supporters were indeed exiled, the sentence was a wrongful one. She refuses to argue politics, however, and does her best to impress upon the PCs the fact that the dragon threatens many innocent people, and that she must find someone who will help the fort survive. If the PCs are not interested in helping, Anna leaves to search for someone who is.

Anna offers to lead the PCs to Fort Akor, explaining along the way that the dragon has attacked once since its original assault, which damaged the wooden fort's palisade. She explains that the creature didn't look exactly like the dragons back home, but that its ferocity and horrible claws and teeth could make it nothing but a dragon. She isn't interested in answering a lot of questions, however, and suggests that Prince Henri himself might be able to provide better answers to the party's questions.

FORT AKOR

> Rocky white jungle-topped cliffs loom over a small cove. A large wooden fort positioned at the center of a small clearing looks upon the cover from high above, its two seaward towers casting long shadows in the afternoon sun. A wooden palisade connects the towers, and two wide wooden ladders extend from the top of the wall to the narrow beach below. A large gate, its massive doors tightly shut, marks the center of the wall. Anna's crew rows her longboat to the shore, where it joins an additional longboat and three canoes, all four in varying stages of completion.

Once the longboat reaches the beach, Anna leads the PCs up one of the ladders and into the fort, taking them to meet Prince Henri in area **A5** without delay, as detailed below under "Meeting with Prince Henri."

Fort Akor consists of a wooden palisade and three towers surrounding a collection of thatched, wood-frame buildings. The soldiers stationed here are tense and nervous, and signs of the tyrannosaur's attacks are evident throughout the fort, mostly in the form of ruined walls and torn up sections of ground. The major features of the fort are described below.

A1. PALISADE

> The 15-foot-high wooden palisade that surrounds Fort Akor is constructed from vertical logs sunk into the ground, sharpened to a point, and reinforced with horizontal cross-braces. A crude 10-foot-high walkway on the jungle-side of the palisade allows soldiers to patrol the top of the wall. A 20-foot-wide section just east of the gate tower is in ruins, with splintered logs scattered about the gap haphazardly.

The damage to the palisade, sustained during the tyrannosaur's second attack, is currently being repaired by a dozen wild elf slaves toiling under the direction of four human soldiers (see area

A6 for statistics). At night, a patrol of four soldiers walks the palisade, making one complete circuit every 15 minutes.

Wood Palisade: 1 ft. thick; Hardness 5; 120 hp; break DC 26; Climb DC 21. *Note*: The gaps in the palisade allow Medium creatures to squeeze through with a successful Escape Artist check (DC 30). Small creatures can squeeze through with a successful Escape Artist check (DC 20); smaller creatures can move through the wall with ease.

A2. THE SEAWARD TOWERS

Each of these towers is a simple 15-foot-high platform built atop four sturdy log pilings. Each platform has a chest-high protective wooden wall and a thatched roof of palm fronds.

The towers are manned around the clock by three soldiers. Each tower is equipped with a ballista and enough ammunition for five shots.

Seaward Tower: Hardness 5; 180 hp; break DC 28; Climb DC 21.

A3. THE GATE TOWER

This wide, sturdy wooden tower straddles the palisade's massive gate. The tower obviously once had more than one floor, but those above the first have been smashed to bits and lie strewn on the ground nearby. The gate beneath the tower remains intact and is reinforced with several thick logs.

The damage to the tower occurred during the tyrannosaur's first attack and has yet to be repaired. At the start of the adventure, 10 soldiers are in the process of lining up three ballistas (with five shots each) on the tower's makeshift roof.

Gate Tower: Hardness 5; 240 hp (currently 118 hp); break DC 30; Climb DC 21.

A4. LARGE THATCHED HUT (EL 6)

This large thatch-roofed hut was built on a slightly raised foundation of rough-hewn planks. Single windows mark each of the hut's four walls except the north, which bears two open doorframes. Hide flaps cover the windows and doors, acting as crude shutters or doors.

This hut once served as a community center for the wild elves, but Prince Henri now claims it as his personal quarters. Four soldiers stand watch outside the hut day and night.

Five grand tapestries divide the hut into two rooms. The prince's bodyguards use the northern chamber, while Prince Henri inhabits the southern half of the hut. The room offers little evidence of the prince's formerly extravagant tastes, bearing a simple military cot, an empty armor stand, a small table and hooded lantern, and a simple washstand. Prince Henri keeps a large, unlocked trunk of non-valuable personal belongings near his bed.

Creatures: The four bodyguards stationed here are a bit tougher than the other soldiers in the fort. Under orders to allow no one into the hut, they defend the place earnestly. If the fort is attacked, they run out to provide what support they can.

Henri's Bodyguards, Human War3 (4): CR 2; Medium humanoid (human); HD 3d8+3; hp 16 each; Init +0; Spd 20 ft.; AC 17, touch 10, flat-footed 17; Base Atk +3; Grp +4; Atk/Full Atk +6 melee (1d8+1, masterwork longsword) or +4 ranged (1d8, masterwork light crossbow); AL LN; SV Fort +4, Ref +1, Will +1; Str 12, Dex 10, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 10.

Skills: Climb +7, Intimidate +6, Listen +2, Ride +6, Spot +2.

Feats: Alertness, Quick Draw, Weapon Focus (longsword).

Possessions: Masterwork longsword, masterwork light crossbow, chainmail, heavy steel shield, *potion of cure moderate wounds*.

Treasure: Prince Henri's men looted the five tapestries, ancient family heirlooms, from his mother's castle as the prince fled. They are worth 250 gp each—the queen would happily pay twice that to get them back intact.

A5. THATCHED HUTS

These small huts have thatched roofs and wooden walls. Each has an open doorway that faces a central fire pit and a window in the opposite wall.

One of these huts serves as Prince Henri's command post, one is furnished to receive guests, two are used to store nonperishable supplies (rope, tools, torches, weapons, etc.), and one is empty. Two soldiers patrol the area day and night.

Prince Henri's command post contains a simple wooden table, one chair, and a hooded lantern on a wooden stand. Hanging over

Handout #1: Prince Henri's Map

the window is a strip of hide on which has been drawn a crude chalk map depicting the fort and the surrounding jungle (see **Handout #1: Prince Henri's Map**). The Xs on the map represent "dragon"-hunting parties sent out after the tyrannosaur's first attack. The Xs of the two groups that did not return have been circled.

A6. BARRACKS

Thick wooden poles suspend these open-air shelters about 6 feet off the ground. Thatched roofs cover each structure.

The fort's soldiers sleep here on bedrolls or homemade frond mats laid out on the wooden floor. Of Prince Henri's original compliment of 90 soldiers, only 40 remain, divided equally into a day and night shift. With the exception of mealtimes and emergencies, any reserve or off-duty soldiers can be found here, sleeping or relaxing in the shade.

Creatures: The soldiers remain loyal to Prince Henri, even in exile. They wouldn't mind better quarters, but the fact that they have the wild elves to do their heavy work has eased their discomfort until recently. The "dragon" attacks have hurt their morale, yet none are strangers to Prince Henri's temper and as of yet there has been little talk of desertion.

The soldiers refuse to discuss the history of Fort Akor with outsiders unless ordered to do so by Prince Henri or Anna. They aren't necessarilly evil or cruel themselves, but they do share Henri's desire for military rule in their homeland. They blame their prince's exile on the petty whims of court nobles instead of on the "oppressed" common folk. Anna herself can be found sleeping here at night; Prince Henri offered her the empty hut in area **A5** but she chose to remain with the men and women here rather than separate herself from the rest of the soldiers.

Soldiers, Human War2 (40): CR 1; Medium humanoid (human); HD 1d8+1; hp 5 each; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; AC 15, touch 10, flat-footed 15; Base Atk +1; Grp +2; Atk/Full Atk +4 melee (1d8+1, masterwork longsword) or +2 ranged (1d8, light crossbow); AL LN; SV Fort +5, Ref +0, Will –1; Str 13, Dex 11, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 8, Cha 9.

Skills: Climb +6, Intimidate +4, Listen –1, Ride +5, Spot -1.

Feats: Great Fortitude, Weapon Focus (longsword).

Possessions: Masterwork longsword, light crossbow, chain shirt, heavy wooden shield.

A7. THE WOBBLY PARROT

The construction of this large open-air hut is similar to that of the barracks, with the addition of a wooden sign bearing a crude picture of a drunken parrot. A thatched roof protects a wooden bar and a few simple tables and chairs.

This makeshift tavern serves morning and evening meals of fish, monkey, or seabird, served with a ubiquitous and tasteless

flatbread made from a fibrous jungle plant. An assortment of jungle fruits rounds out the menu. The bar once served alcohol, but the fort's supplies have long since run out. The tavern staff consists of an old ex-soldier named "Monkey Bob" (profession (cook) +2), who serves as barman and head cook. Four wild elf slaves assist him.

A8. THE ELVEN COMPOUND

This walled-off section of land contains a barren field of mud; the place has an unpleasant reek about it. About three dozen wild elves, mostly women, children, and the infirm, mill about the center of the enclosure, muttering to themselves and attempting to avoid eye contact.

Creatures: This area confines the survivors of the wild elf tribe that came to the aid of Prince Henri and his soldiers during the early months of their exile. The tribe's best warriors and leaders perished attempting to prevent the prince from enslaving their kinsmen. The remaining elves now spend their days huddled in a group at the center of the compound, sullenly awaiting work assignments. Two soldiers guard the compound's gate at all times. The gate is barred from the outside (Open Lock DC 25 to open from the inside).

Prince Henri has put little effort into insuring the continued well-being of the captive elves, since he only needs them for the few months required to finish building his fleet. As a result, the malnourished elves bear signs of rough treatment. The prince doubles the guards around this area whenever the PCs are in the camp, and refuses to let them in to speak with the elves. The soldiers have been ordered to not speak about the elves to outsiders.

Wild Elf Slaves, War1 (32): hp 4 (currently, all the elves are fatigued and have 2 points of nonlethal damage from starvation); *Monster Manual* 102. The elves have no weapons, armor, or equipment.

Authority figures: Maolo (elder), male wild elf Com3; Kriva (elder), female wild elf Rgr2; Veris (elder), male wild elf War2.

Development: These pitiful elves are nearly hopeless with despair. Two men (Maolo and Veris) and a woman (Kriva) can speak for the captives, yet despite the gravity of their situation they make no attempt to contact the PCs, fearing reprisals. If the PCs try to contact the elves, the elders agree to speak to them if they can be convinced to trust them. Their initial attitude is unfriendly and they must be made helpful before they agree to parlay. Additionally, any discussions must be held in secret without the soldiers' knowledge; a difficult task since the compound is guarded at all times.

Assuming that the PCs gain the trust of one of the leaders, the elves can tell the PCs of the events following Prince Henri's arrival and provide a description of the tyrannosaur and its attacks. They have suffered so greatly at the hands of the soldiers that they wish only to escape into the jungle; they have no desire to risk their lives avenging themselves.

MEETING WITH PRINCE HENRI

When Anna and the PCs reach the command post, she asks them to wait outside while she informs the prince of their presence. Moments later, Anna pushes back the door flap of the command hut in area **A5** and gestures for the PCs to enter. Once the heroes enter the hut, Prince Henri rises from his chair and moves to stand by the map posted on the rear wall (show the players **Handout #1: Prince Henri's Map** at this time). Prince Henri's discourse is short and to the point.

"I understand you are willing to help me destroy the dragon that plagues my fort. I admire your courage. Many good soldiers have given their lives to protect these walls, yet the beast continues its assaults.

"The Xs on this map show the directions taken by the patrols I sent out to hunt the dragon, following its first attack. The circled Xs indicate the two patrols that have yet to return. One or both of them could have discovered the dragon's lair.

"I suggest that you depart immediately, while its trail and its wounds remain fresh. If you expect a reward for your efforts, I want the beast's teeth as proof of its demise. The lieutenant can address any other questions you may have. Good luck, and good hunting."

After he has finished, Prince Henri returns to his desk, leaving Anna to usher the PCs out of the hut. If the PCs cause any trouble or are excessively disrespectful, Prince Henri calls for his bodyguards to forcibly eject them. The prince expects a certain amount of improper behavior from adventurers, but his tolerance is limited.

Prince Henri is slim, handsome man with jet-black hair, a thin mustache, and blue eyes. His bearing is harshly military and his face wears a permanent scowl of discontent. The prince dresses impeccably, in or out of armor, and his gear is always spotless and gleaming. During the day, he can be found working at his command post or drilling his troops. He doesn't retire to his quarters until late evening and rises early. Prince Henri is never without his personal bodyguard of four hand-picked veteran soldiers (see p. 20).

Prince Henri's defeat and subsequent exile came as a complete surprise to him. He now regrets the fact that he allowed the people to make their own choice, and upon returning home, plans to force them to accept what he knows is best for them. His exile has hardened and changed him, and he grows more cruel and spiteful with each passing day.

Prince Henri, Male Human Ari2/Ftr6: CR 7; Medium humanoid (human); HD 2d8+6d10+16; hp 65; Init +7; Spd 30 ft.; AC 18, touch 13, flat-footed 15; Base Atk +7; Grp +9; Atk +12 melee (1d6+5/18-20, +1 *rapier*); Full Atk +12/+7 melee (1d6+5/18-20, +1 *rapier*) or +10/+5 ranged (1d4+2/19-20, thrown

daggers); SV Fort +7, Ref +5, Will +4; AL LE; Str 15, Dex 16, Con 14, Int 13, Wis 8, Cha 16.

Skills: Bluff +8, Climb +7, Handle Animal +10, Intimidate +17, Knowledge (nobility and royalty) +6, Listen +4, Ride +14, Spot +4.

Feats: Combat Expertise, Improved Initiative, Leadership (Cohort: Anna Samos), Quickdraw, Skill Focus (Intimidate), Weapon Finesse, Weapon Focus (rapier), Weapon Specialization (rapier).

Languages: Common, Elven.

Possessions: *+1 rapier*, 2 daggers, masterwork chain shirt, buckler, *ring of mind shielding*, signet ring with topaz (100 gp) and a *bag of holding type I* containing 122 pp, 420 gp and 839 sp.

TALKING TO LIEUTENANT ANNA SAMOS

Anna responds truthfully to any questions the heroes may have, but never offers information beyond what is asked for. If asked to describe the dragon, Anna speaks of a monstrous reptilian creature, standing half again as tall as the palisade, with mottled green skin and huge jaws filled with enormous teeth. If asked about wings or a breath weapon, Anna confirms that the creature lacked wings and relied on its bite to attack. Anna can also give a reasonable account both of attacks on the fort:

> "We had little warning of the first attack; it was late at night and foggy, and the dragon approached slowly with its head lowered. As the beast drew near the palisade, the soldiers in the gate tower opened fire. At first it didn't even seem to notice the sting of the bolts piercing its hide, but after a dozen shots had hit home, the beast raised its head, let out a deafening roar, and charged the tower. It destroyed the tower with one snap of its huge jaws and then set upon the soldiers inside. Two soldiers were knocked from the tower and trampled beneath its massive claws, and several others snapped up and devoured as they sought to flee. It was horrible!
>
> "We had warning of the second attack, but it did us no good. The dragon came charging through the jungle, shaking the ground with every step and letting out a roar that froze the blood. The soldiers were ready, but it moved so quickly! It burst from the jungle and smashed into the palisade. The wall took a terrible shock, but held, thank the gods. Even better, the impact seemed to stun the beast, and it just stood there scrabbling in the muck of the jungle floor for a few precious moments. When then dragon shook off its stupor, the soldiers had done it enough harm that it was forced to take flight. If it had hit that wall again, we'd have been in real trouble."

If asked about rewards for the work, Anna says that the Prince has little of monetary value to offer, but that perhaps the gratitude of a prince is itself its own reward. If they continue to press for a monetary reward, Anna tells them she'll speak to the prince about it but doesn't promise anything.

Anna refuses to answer questions that don't relate directly to the dragon slaying mission, stating that in their current role the matter doesn't concern them. She dodges questions about the prince, the Fort's history, or the elf captives as best she can. Her initial attitude toward the heroes is indifferent, but if the PCs use Diplomacy or magic to change her attitude to helpful she takes them aside and confides the following information in a lowered voice:

> "While it's true that the conditions here seem to have brought out the worst in the prince, I implore you to put yourself in his shoes. His own mother exiled him here simply for attempting to honor the memory of his father, and life here has been anything but simple. While I can't say I agree with the way he's been treating these elves, or even those horrible centaurs, for that matter, I believe he's still an honorable man who deserves a chance to rule. And no matter what you may think of the prince, you surely can't consign the other men and women here to death, can you? Please, just slay this dragon and I'm sure things will get better around here."

If pressed further, she tells the PCs the recent history of the fort, including the battle with the elves and the centaurs, but as she does so she tries her best to paint the prince in a good light. A successful Sense Motive check (DC 20) allows a character to get a hunch that Anna's love and loyalty for her prince may have blinded her to some of his cruelty. As the prince's cohort, she won't betray him except in the most extreme situation.

If the PCs decide not to set out on the hunt at once, Anna shows them to the guest quarters (area **A5**). She informs the PCs that Fort Akor is a military installation, and as visitors to the Fort their access is limited to the main courtyard, the beach, and the Wobbly Parrot. After nightfall, the PCs are expected to report to their quarters and remain there until morning. She warns the PCs that the soldiers are under orders to arrest any visitors discovered in a restricted area. If Anna feels that the PCs represent a significant risk, she keeps an eye on them personally.

Lieutenant Anna Samos, Female Human War4: CR 3; Medium humanoid (human); HD 3d8+6; hp 21; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 19, touch 11, flat-footed 18; Base Atk +4; Grp +7; Atk/Full Atk +9 melee (1d8+3, masterwork longsword) or +6 ranged (1d8, masterwork light crossbow); AL LN; SV Fort +6, Ref +2, Will +2; Str 16, Dex 13, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 8, Cha 12.

Skills: Climb +10, Intimidate +8, Ride +8.

Feats: Iron Will, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (longsword).

Possessions: Masterwork longsword, masterwork light crossbow, *+1 chainmail*, *+1 heavy wood shield*, *potion of cure moderate wounds*.

PART II: THE DRAGON HUNT BEGINS

Once the PCs agree to hunt the "dragon," Prince Henri expects them to begin immediately. He understands if they want to rest overnight and prepare for the hunt, but if the PCs delay longer than this, the prince summons them to his command post and berates them for their lack of professionalism.

The southern gate has been walled over to reinforce it against further attacks. To exit the fort, the characters must climb a ladder to the top of the palisade and then down a rope on the other side; climbing down this rope requires a successful Climb check (DC 5). When all the PCs are outside the fort, the rope is pulled up and the ladder removed. Prince Henri refuses to allow the PCs back into the fort until they have completed their mission.

When the adventure starts, it has been just over 24 hours since the most recent "dragon" attack and it's rained for about an hour. Nevertheless, locating the Huge beast's tracks is relatively easy; its imprints sunk deep into the very soft wet ground of the jungle floor. A successful Survival check (DC 5) is required to find the tracks. Since it rains for about an hour every afternoon, the Survival check DC to stay on the trail increases by +2 every day. Three days after the adventure starts, therefore, a character requires the Track feat to remain on the trail.

A successful Knowledge (arcana) check (DC 20) notes that the tracks are not dragon tracks. Similarly, a successful Knowledge (nature) check (DC 20) confirms that the tracks belong to some sort of Huge animal.

If the Survival check to pick up the trail by Fort Akor exceeds the required DC by 10 or more, that character notices evidence that the "dragon" started clawing the ground near the damaged palisade, almost like it was trying to dig a hole. If the PCs dig in the muddy soil here for ten minutes and make a successful Search check (DC 20), they discover the corpse of a Medium reptilian animal.

The corpse is that of the hatchling tyrannosaur, but it is very badly decomposed. A successful Knowledge (nature) check (DC 20) confirms that the thing is not a baby dragon but some sort of animal. If this check exceeds the required DC by 10 points, the character can identify the body as a baby tyrannosaurus. This discovery should lead the heroes to suspect that the tyrannosaur's appearance at the fort is more than just chance. They may wish to speak to Prince Henri again about this discovery, but he refuses to see them. The prince doesn't care why the "dragon" is attacking; he just wants it dead.

The dinosaur's trail leads roughly southeast from Fort Akor, deviating only to avoid obstacles that the tyrannosaur could not bash down. The dense jungle canopy makes tracking the tyrannosaur from the air impossible. In addition, visibility in the jungle is poor, and if the tracker doesn't have a light source or low-light vision the DC to track the dinosaur increases by +3. A new Survival check must be made every mile in order to continue following the trail. The map of the Fort Akor Environs indicates the points along the dinosaur's trail at which these checks must be made.

As the characters enter the jungle, read them following:

> The relatively flat terrain along the coast soon gives way to low, jungle-covered ridges separated by small, intermittent streams. Along with this change in terrain comes a gradual thickening of the undergrowth and a noticeable increase in the activity level of the jungle's biting insects. It's tough going, even on a path trampled by a dragon.

As the characters follow the dragon's trail, they come across several set encounter areas. These encounters should provide enough intrigue and action to keep the story moving along, but if you want to include additional encounters with jungle creatures, feel free to do so. A list of creatures that can be encountered in a warm forest appears on page 97 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*.

Finally, you should familiarize yourself with the rules on forest terrain on page 87 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*. The Myhral Jungle is a dense forest, but the damp environs make the threat of forest fires lower.

B. AMBUSH (EL 9)

> It appears that the dragon's route took it right through the center of a feeding spot for the jungle's monkey population. The ground is littered here with the remains of a jungle-fruit feast. The canopy above teems with the long-tailed creatures, every one of them leaping about and chattering loudly in protest over your intrusion.

To protect the tyrannosaur from reprisals while it healed between attacks, Lucien dispatched a small party to this location to set up an ambush point. The group consists of two centaurs (Garth and Alza) and five quaggoths (bear-like humanoids from a large tribe to the west). The centaur druid Cerra joined the group along the way, after seeing the group depart the temple.

Just after dawn each day, Garth scatters an assortment of appetizing fruits along the tyrannosaur's trail, 300 feet northwest of their ambush point. The local monkeys, defensive of this easy meal, chatter in alarm when anything approaches within 100 feet of the food. Their cries serve to warn the centaurs and quaggoths to be at the ready.

LOST IN THE JUNGLE

As long as the PCs stay on the trail, chances of becoming lost in the jungle are slim. If they lose the trail or wander off from it, though, they may become lost (see pages 86–87 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*). Losing the trail of the dinosaur or becoming lost doesn't mean that the PCs can no longer finish the adventure, but it should make the prospect more difficult. If the characters are having exceptional difficulty relocating the trail, you can have them encounter some centaurs or quaggoths. If forced to flee, they can be tracked to the Grand Temple. Likewise, if they are forced to talk they can provide directions to the Grand Temple in exchange for mercy.

A successful Knowledge (nature) check (DC 25) allows a character to note that the placement and types of fruit in this area is odd, almost as if the food had been deliberately piled here.

Creatures: The centaurs and quaggoths maintain separate campsites at the ambush site and only take up their positions when alerted by the cries of the monkeys. The quaggoths split their force in half and hide 20 feet to either side of the tyrannosaur's trail at the base of a low ridge. The centaurs hide along the top of the ridge, another 80 feet further down the trail. Cerra hides just off the trail, and Garth and Alza hide 40 feet to the left and right of the trail. All of them take 10 on their Hide checks (giving a result of 15 for the quaggoths, 11 for Garth and Alza, and 19 for Cerra). Remember to account for distance when characters attempt to Spot the ambushers.

Render Quaggoths (5): CR 3; Medium monstrous humanoid; HD 3d8+6; hp 23, 21, 20, 17, 16; Init +4; Spd 30 ft., climb 30 ft.; AC 14, touch 10, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +3; Grp +7; Atk +7 melee (1d8+6/×3, longspear); Full Atk +7 melee (1d4+4, 2 claws) and +2 melee (1d4+2, bite) or +7 melee (1d8+6/×3, longspear); SA quaggoth rage; SQ immune to fear, scent; SV Fort +3, Ref +3, Will +4; AL NE; Str 18, Dex 11, Con 15, Int 7, Wis 12, Cha 10.

Skills: Climb +12, Hide +3 (+5 in jungles), Listen +3, Spot +3, Survival +4.

Feats: Alertness, Improved Initiative.

Quaggoth Rage (Ex): A quaggoth that takes damage in combat has a 1 in 6 chance of flying into a berserk rage the following round, dropping its longspear and clawing and biting madly until either it or its opponent is dead. It gains +4 Strength and –4 AC. The quaggoth cannot end its rage voluntarily.

Possessions: Longspear.

**Note*: These quaggoths have dyed their normally white fur in greens and browns, giving them a +2 circumstance bonus to Hide checks in the jungle. Quaggoths are detailed on page 75 of *Monsters of Faerûn*.

Garth and Alza, Male and Female Centaurs (2): hp 32, 27; Hide +1; *Monster Manual* 32.

Feats: Skill Focus (hide), Weapon Focus (hoof).

Cerra, Female Centaur Drd5: CR 6; Large monstrous humanoid; HD 9d8+27 (Drd); hp 72; Init +3; Spd 80 ft.; AC 14, touch 11, flat-footed 12; Base Atk +7; Grp +14; Atk +11 melee (1d8+4, large masterwork quarterstaff); Full Atk +9/+9/+4 melee (1d8+4, large masterwork quarterstaff) and +4 melee (1d6+1, 2 hooves); SA spells, wildshape 1/day; SQ animal companion, darkvision 60 ft., nature sense, resist nature's lure, trackless step, wild empathy, woodland stride; SV Fort +8, Ref +8, Will +12; AL N; Str 16, Dex 16, Con 16, Int 12, Wis 19, Cha 10.

Skills: Heal +9, Hide +9, Knowledge (nature) +8, Listen +10, Move Silently +12, Spellcraft +3, Spot +8, Survival +10 (+12 in aboveground natural environments).

Feats: Scribe Scroll, Skill Focus (hide), Stealthy, Two-Weapon Fighting.

Languages: Common, Elven, Sylvan.

Druid Spells Prepared (5/4/3/2; save DC 14 + spell level): 0—*create water, cure minor wounds* (2), *know direction, purify food and drink*; 1st—*charm animal, cure light wounds, faerie fire, shillelagh*; 2nd—*animal messenger, barkskin, hold animal*; 3rd—*cure moderate wounds, greater magic fang*.

Possessions: Masterwork quarterstaff, *periapt of wisdom* +2, *horseshoes of speed*, ten scrolls of *cure light wounds*, two scrolls of *entangle*, two scrolls of *tree shape*, two scrolls of *resist elements*, four pearls worth 100 gp and two pieces of jade worth 50 gp.

Avilor, tropical eagle animal companion: Small animal; HD 3d8+6; hp 22; Init +3; Spd 10 ft., fly 80 ft.; AC 17, touch 14, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +2; Grp –2; Atk +5 melee (1d4, talon); Full Atk +5 melee (1d4, talon) and +0 melee (1d4, bite); SQ evasion, link, low-light vision, share spells; AL N; SV Fort +4, Ref +6, Will +3; Str 11, Dex 16, Con 12, Int 2, Wis 14, Cha 6.

Skills: Listen +6, Spot +14*.

Feats: Alertness, Weapon Finesse. *Tricks*: Attack, Come, Down, Fetch, Heel, Seek, Stay, Track.

*Eagles have a +8 racial bonus to Spot checks.

Tactics: Cerra begins the ambush by casting *entangle* on the vegetation around the PCs as they start up the ridge. The quaggoths circle the perimeter of the *entangle* effect, using the reach of their longspears to attack anyone who tries to escape. Cerra then retreats to the south along the trail to area **D**, using her trackless step to avoid leaving a trail. Garth and Alza spend a few rounds observing the battle from hiding in order to size up the PCs and learn their strengths and weaknesses before they retreat to the Grand Temple (area **E**). If the PCs detect the ambush before Cerra can cast her spell, the centaurs consider the ambush a failure and retreat as previously described. If the centaurs are sub-

THE RENDER QUAGGOTH TRIBE

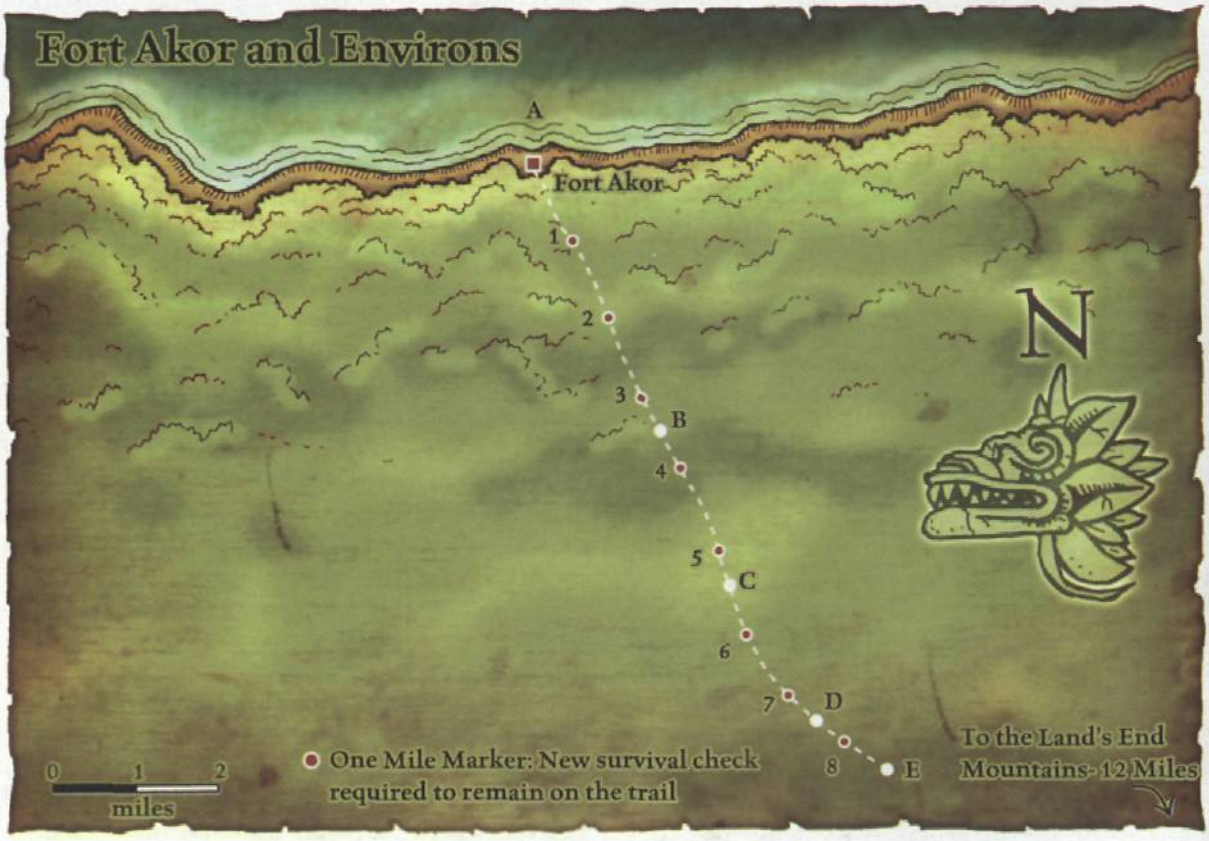
If the PCs head southwest from Fort Akor, toward the other circled X on Prince Henri's map (see area **A5**), they eventually stumble upon a patrol of quaggoths. Normally dwelling in the underdark, this tribe of quaggoths were forced to flee their homeland and now live in a cave system near the surface. They call themselves the Renders, and have been enemies of the wild elves and centaurs for ages. After he gained command of the tribe, Lucien approached Mobuthula (the leader of the Renders) and forged an alliance; in return for helping the centaurs fight the humans, the quaggoths have first choice of the captured weaponry. The Render tribe itself does not play a large part in this adventure, but should statistics be needed if the PCs insist on visiting the caves, use the following as a guideline.

Since the Render quaggoths no longer live in the underdark, they speak Common rather than Undercommon.

Render Quaggoth Tribe (thorp): Monstrous; AL CE; Population 60 adult quaggoths, 20-gp limit; Assets 400 gp.

Authority figures: Mobuthula (chieftain), male quaggoth Bbn3; Grekna (champion) female quaggoth Ftr2; Banta (sub-chief), male quaggoth Bbn1; Lazea (sub-chief), female quaggoth Clr2.

Notes: Five quaggoths are found at area **B**, and Banta and another five quaggoths are at the Grand Temple (area **E**).



jected to ranged attacks, they benefit from cover. They ignore any attempt by the PCs to communicate at this time, thinking them no different than the other humans at Fort Akor.

The quaggoths retreat if at least two of them are dropped; the survivors separate once out of sight and then hide their tracks as they head back to their lair (see the sidebar).

Development: As the eldest of the surviving centaurs, Cerra was the rightful leader of those who fled Fort Akor. Her cautious nature and distaste for open conflict allowed her charismatic and hateful son Lucien to usurp this position. Cerra remained with the band out of a sense of protective duty until she learned of the hatchling tyrannosaur's death at Lucien's hands, and of the pending alliance with the Render tribe. Furious at the other centaurs for betraying their ideals, Cerra left the band and fled the temple. Cerra joined the ambush only for the sake of the tyrannosaur, which she believes to be the last of its kind, and therefore worthy of protection from the murderous humans.

C. THE EFFIGY (EL 6)

The beast's trail suddenly breaks into a circular clearing trampled into the jungle undergrowth. At the center of the clearing, inside one of the huge footprints, stands a framework of rough-hewn branches lashed together with jungle vines. Hanging from the wooden frame are the bloody, battle-damaged armor and weapons typical of a soldier from Fort Akor.

The centaurs created this 15-foot-diameter clearing and effigy to scare off any intruders. The characters must make a new Track check to pick up the tyrannosaur's trail on the opposite side of the clearing, but since the trail now includes hoofprints (the centaurs) and bestial footprints (quaggoths), the DC for tracking the trail is adjusted by –2.

Creatures: Two tigers have been drawn to the area by the scent of the bloody equipment. The tigers attack aggressively upon finding potential prey in the clearing, but are quick to flee if they face tough resistance.

Tigers (2): hp 51, 44; *Monster Manual* 281.

D. AN ULTIMATUM (EL 7)

At this point along the trail, Cerra confronts the characters. She stands just on the other side of the **Trap**. Read the following to the players when Cerra calls out to the PCs.

"The Prince and his killers are no longer welcome in this jungle. You shall slaughter no more and enslave no longer. Return to your homeland or face this jungle's justice. This conflict must end."

Creature: To Cerra, the PCs are no different than any of the other inhabitants of Fort Akor, and sees them as equally responsible as the soldiers for the deaths of her fellow centaurs and the enslavement of the wild elves. If the PCs object to her accusa-

tions and attempt to defend their honor, she cuts them off. Cerra intends to further condemn the action of the prince and his soldiers, but her emotions get the best of her:

> "Liars! You and your foul prince came to our shores with no knowledge of the jungle and we kept you from death. You *repaid us with slavery and murder. Now my people hurl the* jungle's precious resources at your walls to drive you from these lands, while you crash about blindly, destroying anything that displeases you. There is no defense for any of you. All of you share the blame."

Cerra, Female Centaur Drd5: hp 72; see area **B** above for full statistics.

Trap (EL 3): A heavy log suspended by jungle vines is rigged to swing across the trail when a passing foot snags a cleverly hidden vine tripwire.

Deadfall: CR 4; mechanical, touch trigger; manual reset; Atk +12 melee (3d6+11, swinging log); multiple targets (all targets in a 5-ft.-by-20-ft. area on the path); Search (DC 20); Disable Device (DC 20).

Tactics: Cerra casts *barkskin* and *resist elements (fire)* from one of her scrolls before confronting the characters. If the PCs attack, Cerra fights back with her spells, using her speed advantage to avoid melee. If reduced to less than 50% of her hit points, she attempts to disengage from combat so that she can retreat and inform the other centaurs that the PCs are nearing the Grand Temple. Remember that she does not leave a trail to be tracked.

Development: Cerra's initial attitude is hostile. If the PCs can adjust her attitude to unfriendly (or better), she begins to question her initial assessment of them and calms down enough to test their real intentions. She begins by stating outright that she intends to see this "foul prince" (Prince Henri) put to death for his crimes against her people. If the PCs remain unfazed by this challenge (or if they managed to adjust her attitude to friendly or better), she admits that the prince's punishment is of minor importance next to the need to halt the escalating human-centaur conflict before more harm comes to the jungle's denizens.

Cerra believes that the first step toward resolving this conflict is to end the tyrannosaur attacks on Fort Akor. She is aware of the reason for the tyrannosaur's rage, and tells the PCs that someone needs to return the hatchling's corpse to its mother's nest (area **E1**). Cerra tells the PCs of her son's involvement. She fears he is beyond redemption, and although she would like a peaceful solution to the problem, she fears that only Lucien's death can divert the centaurs from their destructive path.

If the PCs agree recover the dead tyrannosaur hatchling, Cerra waits for them here. Once they return, she accompanies them to the nest and provides what aid she can.

If the PCs plan to invade the Grand Temple and eliminate Lucien, Cerra asks them to swear an oath that they will not try to kill any of the other centaurs encountered there. She

explains that Lucien has poisoned their minds with his words and that once he is out of the picture, they'll stop fighting. If the PCs comply, she gives them half her scrolls of *cure light wounds* and provides them with the locations of all remaining centaurs, a description of Lucien, and a rough description of areas **E6–E9**. Cerra's description includes the means of opening the door to the temple (area **E4**), the locations of all secret doors, and the properties of the floor trap in area **E7**. She expresses reservations about the statues in area **E6** and **E8**, but admits to not knowing if they are really dangerous. Cerra refuses to accompany the PCs into the Grand Temple unless her attitude is adjusted to helpful.

PART III: THE GRAND TEMPLE

The surrounding vegetation reclaimed the Grand Temple long ago, making it appear as just another jungle-covered hill. A successful Spot check (DC 15) reveals the temple for what it is. Remember to apply the –1 per 10 feet of distance penalty.

> The surrounding jungle thins ahead to give up one of its secrets—a grand ziggurat of gray stone so choked with vines and plants as to be almost unrecognizable as a structure. Each of its eight tiers rises twice the height of a man, for a combined height of nearly 100 feet. A steep stairway climbs the side of the lower four tiers to what appears to be an open gallery. Numerous thin streams of water trickle down the sides of the ziggurat from a burbling well at its peak.

Long abandoned by its builders, this temple is now inhabited by the remnants of the centaur band that was driven from Fort Akor by Prince Henri. Also present is a delegation of quaggoths from the Render tribe, here to seal an alliance for an eventual assault on Fort Akor.

The condition of the interior is consistent with a relatively soft stone structure that has been neglected for many years. All surfaces are pitted and cracked, and vines and mosses grow from every fissure. The carvings that once decorated these surfaces are now only vaguely recognizable. All rooms in the grand temple have 8-foot ceilings and are unlit unless otherwise noted.

Doors and secret doors are made of one-piece stone blocks that pivot open along their central axis. The doors can be blocked from pivoting by sliding a wooden bar set into the door so that it fits into a hole in the doorframe. These simple barring mechanisms are accessible only from the side of the door that faces deeper into the Grand Temple.

Stone Door: 4 in. thick; Hardness 8; 60 hp; Break DC 28.

Creature: If the PCs remove more than 2,000 gp worth of precious metal, gems, or jewelry from the walls of the Grand Temple (areas **E4**, **E6**, **E7** and **E9**) in a 24-hour period, a couatl is called by ancient magic to confront them. The couatl appears within 10 feet of the largest concentration of treasure; if anyone is present it demands that the items looted from the temple be returned. If the PCs refuse, the couatl attacks, fighting until either it or the PCs are slain. If no one is present at the time of its arrival, it wraps around the treasure and *plane shifts* away with it.

PCs that visit the audience chamber (area **E9**) and leave the temple without causing the couatl to seek them out receive +2 sacred bonus on attack rolls and saving throws against fear effects for a week. Characters involved in the death of the couatl suffer a –2 penalty on attack rolls and saving throws against fear effects for a week. This effect manifests at caster level 20.

Couatl (1): hp 80, *Monster Manual* 38.

E1. LAIR OF THE TYRANNOSAUR (EL 10)

> You have reached the end of the beast's trail; the swath of crushed undergrowth leads into a vine-covered hollow in the corner of the ruined ziggurat. Beyond the vines a large nest of shredded jungle foliage is barely visible. The clearing of torn-up jungle surrounding the nest is strewn with an assortment of badly damaged chainmail armor, shields, and weapons.

The nest still contains a few bits of eggshell from the birth of the tyrannosaur's now dead hatchling. The equipment is all that remains of a patrol that Prince Henri sent out following the tyrannosaur's first attack (see **Treasure**).

Creature: The tyrannosaur came to this jungle from the other side of the Land's End Mountains to the south while searching a subterranean passage for a warm place to construct a nest for its future hatchling. When the PCs arrive at the Grand Temple, the dinosaur is in the center of the clearing, tearing at an elephant carcass. A successful Listen check (DC 0) allows the PCs to hear the terrible sounds well before they arrive in the clearing.

The tyrannosaur attacks immediately if it sees a large group (more than 3) of people approach within 50 feet of its nest.

Advanced Tyrannosaurus Rex: CR 10; Huge Animal; HD 23d8+184; hp 313 (currently 198); Init +2; AC 15, touch 10, flat-footed 13; Base Atk +17; Grp +37; Atk/Full Atk +28 melee (3d6+16); Space/Reach 15 ft./10 ft.; SA improved grab, swallow whole; SQ low-light vision, scent; AL N; SV Fort +21, Ref +15, Will +11; Str 32, Dex 14, Con 26, Int 2, Wis 15, Cha 13.

Skills: Hide +0; Listen +14; Spot +14.

Feats: Alertness, Improved Natural Attack (bite), Iron Will, Run, Toughness (3), Track.

Tactics: The tyrannosaur fights to the death to defend its nest. When faced with multiple opponents, the dinosaur always goes after the target that caused it the most damage (or the largest target if it has not yet been harmed). The tyrannosaur pursues fleeing attackers unless it has been reduced to less than 25% of its maximum hit points, in which case it remains in its nest to nurse its wounds.

Treasure: The bits of equipment around the nest include a +2 *heavy steel shield* that once belonged to another of Prince

Henri's lieutenants and a collection of belt pouches containing 16 pp, 42 gp, 88 sp, and 10 gems worth 100 gp each. A Search check (DC 20) is required to collect the belt pouches.

Development: If combat occurs here, the centaurs at area E3 might hear and move into position above the tyrannosaur's lair to fire their bows at the characters.

Combat is not the only way to "defeat" the dinosaur threat. As long as the PCs give the nest a wide berth and don't antagonize the tyrannosaur, they can explore the remainder of the temple with relative safety. Spells like *charm monster* or *dominate animal* can even turn the tyrannosaur into an ally. If *speak with animals* is cast, the tyrannosaur is far too furious and enraged to answer questions until its attitude is adjusted to at least indifferent.

A character with the wild empathy skill can try to befriend the dinosaur. Its initial attitude is unfriendly. If the body of the dinosaur's hatchling is returned in conjunction with a wild empathy check, the check gains a +10 bonus to the roll. If no PCs have wild empathy, Cerra (if she is present) can make the check. If the dinosaur's attitude can be adjusted to friendly, it allows the characters to enter its nest area and search as long as they don't disturb the egg fragments or attack. If its attitude is adjusted to helpful, the dinosaur imprints on the character and follows her around for 1d6 hours, protecting her from attacks and catching animals for her to eat. Once this time has passed, it returns to its nest but remains friendly toward the character and her allies.

Ad-hoc Experience Award: If the PCs defeat the tyrannosaur in combat, award them 90% experience points if they did so while the dinosaur was wounded when they encountered it. If PCs eliminate the threat of the tyrannosaur by returning the corpse of the hatchling to its nest, they receive the full XP award for the tyrannosaur as if they had defeated it in combat.

E2. THE GRAND STAIRWAY

The stairway that climbs up the first three tiers of the grand temple is 20 feet wide and nearly 60 feet long. The stairs are steep enough that ascending them requires a Climb check (DC 5).

E3. PLAZA OF THE HEAVENS (EL 5)

The fifth and upper tiers are offset from the center to make room for a small plaza and open gallery. The central feature of the plaza is a long, shallow reflecting pool surrounded by statues, but time and neglect have reduced these to a tangle of jungle plants.

Creatures: Two centaurs named Asyr and Calix patrol this area. If the PCs approach the temple openly, one of the centaurs spots them automatically. If the PCs conceal their approach, the centaurs detect them with a successful Listen or Spot check, as appropriate. A centaur that notices intruders immediately alerts the other, and both move to deal with the threat.

Asyr and Calix, Male and Female Centaurs (2): hp 31, 30; Hide +4; *Monster Manual* 33.

Feats: Skill Focus (hide), Weapon Focus (hoof).

Possessions: Masterwork greatclub, composite longbow (+4 Strength bonus), quiver with 20 arrows.

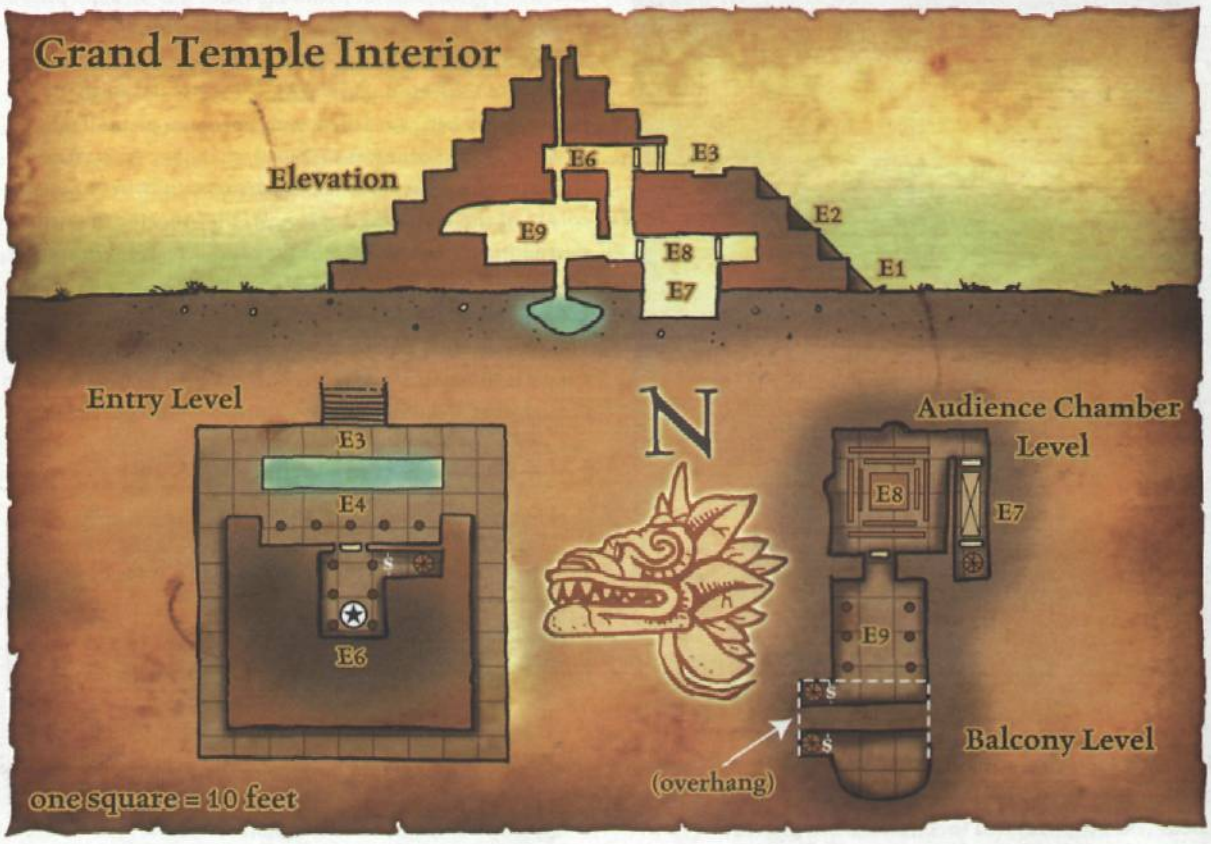
Tactics: The centaurs stand 40 feet apart and far enough back from the edge to gain cover from opponents below them. They concentrate their fire on a single opponent, giving priority to those that can fly or demonstrate potent ranged attacks. They continue firing until reduced to less than 50% of their hit points or their opponents reach the third tier. The centaurs then move back from the edge, draw their greatclubs, and wait for the first PCs to appear.

When a PC reaches this tier, one of the centaurs attempts to bull rush the character off the side of the tier. A PC knocked to the second tier takes 1d6 points of damage from the fall. A PC knocked back down the stairs must make a successful Balance check (DC 17) or tumble to the bottom, taking 3d6 points of damage in the process.

NEW MAGIC ITEM: MASK OF THE TIGER

This mask grants the wearer the ability to *polymorph* into a tiger once per day for up to eight hours. The mask also carries a curse. Each time the wearer transforms into a tiger he must make a successful Fortitude save (DC 15) or contract lycanthropy and transform into a weretiger.

Moderate transmutation; CL 7th; Craft Wondrous Item, *polymorph*; Price 22,400 gp; Weight 1 lb.



If overwhelmed, the centaurs retreat to area **E6** and close the main door. The centaurs fight to the death to keep the PCs from entering the temple, but break off their attack if the PCs disengage and retreat back down the steps.

Development: If Cerra is with the characters, she encourages the party to try to parlay with the centaurs. Their initial attitude is hostile, but if Cerra is with the group any Diplomacy checks made to adjust the centaurs' attitudes gain a +2 bonus. Asyr and Calix fear Lucien as much as they hate the humans of Fort Akor, and while they won't aid the party in a fight against their leader, they allow them to enter the temple uncontested if their attitudes can be adjusted to indifferent. Otherwise, they attack as described above.

E4. GALLERY OF CHAMPIONS

Five columns only barely recognizable as figures of men and women support the roof of this narrow gallery. Beyond the row of columns a large stone door decorated with a raised relief of a winged, feathered serpent dominates the far wall. Hundreds of tiny gemstones decorate the serpent's body, making it glitter with a rainbow of color. Numerous hieroglyphs mark the remainder of the door's face. To either side of the door is the impression of a hand.

The door is a solid block of eight-inch-thick stone. The door is held closed by an *arcane lock* spell (CL 17) that can be deactivated by delivering any touch spell into one of the hand-shaped impressions. This door is normally left open, but if Lucien knows the PCs are on the way he orders it closed.

A character who studies the carvings and runes on the door for a minute can make a Decipher Script check (DC 30) to discover the proper method to open the door.

Stone Door: 8 in. thick; Hardness 8; 120 hp; Break DC 38.

Treasure: Set into the relief of the serpent, are 454 tiny gems worth 5 gp each. Recovering all the gems requires no less than 4 hours of toil.

E5. THE WELLSPRING

A ten 10-foot-wide well dominates the peak of the ziggurat. Clear water bubbles up and over the edge of the well, draining down the sides of the ziggurat in several streams.

The Grand Temple was constructed over a strong-flowing natural spring so that its waters could be used to fill interior pools and basins. The unused flow rises up through the temple and cascades down its sides. The shaft of the well descends a little over 100 feet before opening into a large underground reservoir of pure water.

E6. THE GRAND ENTRY (EL 7+)

Two rows of stone columns flank a simple stone pedestal at the end of this long room. Sitting on the pedestal is a 2-foot-tall jeweled sculpture of shining gold that depicts a pair of identical golden warriors attacking each other with spears.

This room was designed to not only allow access into the temple's inner chambers, but to punish greedy treasure seekers. The secret door in the center of the west wall can be located with a successful Search check (DC 28).

Trap: The sculpture of the twin warriors, which just begs to be stolen, affects anyone touching it as if they had looked into a *mirror of opposition*. This effect occurs every time the sculpture is touched by a living creature, either directly or with an object. The sculpture functions in this way up to four times a day.

The sculpture itself was fixed into the pedestal with *stone shape* spells. It is surprisingly easy to break off (Strength check DC 20), but doing so releases a cloud of burnt othur fumes into the chamber.

Burnt Othur Vapor Trap: CR 7; mechanical; touch trigger; repair reset; gas; multiple targets (all targets in a 10-ft.-by-10-ft. area); never miss; poison (burnt othur fumes, DC 18 Fortitude save resists, 1 Con drain/3d6 Con); Search DC 21; Disable Device DC 28.

Treasure: If the gold statue is removed from this chamber it immediately loses its magical properties. Hollow, the gold statue nonetheless weighs about 900 pounds. If it can be transported back to civilization, it is worth 2,800 gp.

E7. HALL OF HEROES (EL 6)

The walls of this hallway bear bas-reliefs of human-sized figures, accented here and there with gemstone eyes and personal jewelry. The figures stand in positions that suggest combat, study, discovery, and diplomacy. Time has blurred their lines, but it's still obvious that the bas-reliefs were meant to show great respect for these individuals.

A successful Search check (DC 10) of the bas-reliefs reveals evidence of recent looting. Lucien is responsible for this; he has been using treasure taken from this hall to pay for his alliance with the Render tribe. He hasn't yet stolen enough to trigger the couatl (area **E6**), but if left to continue he will do so within a week's time. The floor of the hallway contains a **Trap** that is activated by one of the centaurs when the PCs have reached the mid-point of the hallway. A **Creature** lurks within the depths of the **Trap**.

Creature: When the centaurs moved into the Grand Temple, they ran afoul of an ochre jelly that had made its way into this chamber. During the combat, the jelly split in two. The centaurs destroyed one of the halves, but the other escaped into the pit and has fully recovered from the battle. When the tilting hallway is closed, the jelly cannot climb out. Should any creatures fall into the pit, however, it quickly attacks.

Ochre Jelly: hp 58, *Monster Manual* 202.

Trap: The floor of this hall pivots on its east-west axis when not locked by the lever in area **E8**. When unlocked, the floor pivots toward its heaviest side and dumps anything in the hallway into a pit. The floor pivots in either direction, continuing to do so until there is no weight difference between its two sides. It's weighted to return to a level position once its two sides are equalized.

The floor of the 20-foot pit is flooded to a depth of one foot with water. Worse, it's set with sharp, stone spikes. PCs trapped in the pit can escape from either side by making a successful Climb check (DC 15) as long as the floor isn't locked. If the floor is locked, a Strength check (DC 28) is required to wrench it open.

Pivoting Floor Spiked Pit Trap: CR 3; mechanical; location trigger; automatic reset; lock bypass; DC 20 Reflex save avoids; 20 ft. deep (3d6, fall); multiple targets (any creature in area **E7**); pit spikes (Atk +10 melee, 1d4 spikes per target for 1d4+2 each); Search DC 18; Disable Device 15.

Treasure: The treasure remaining embedded in the walls of this area consists of 32 gems worth 50 gp each and an assortment of gold and silver jewelry (rings, bracelets, armbands and torcs) worth a total of 1,225 gp.

E8. THE HANGING GARDENS (EL 8)

Sunlight streams down through small square openings in the ceiling and falls upon a number of long, wooden boxes suspended just above eye-level on woven cords. These boxes hold brown, dried-out remains of what must have once been an extensive hanging garden. Water splashes into a pair of basins built into the walls opposite the room's two entrances.

At the center of the dead garden a low dais supports a standing figure. The statue depicts a large, muscular man dressed in a knee-length loincloth and short cape of colorful feathers. The figure wears a tiger mask on its head and multiple golden bracelets on its wrists and ankles.

The 12-foot-high ceiling of this room is ventilated by twenty 4-inch-square shafts. These shafts angle down from the temple's fifth tier to allow sunlight into the room. The water flowing into the basins comes from the same spring that feeds area **E5**, entering from an overhead spout and draining out an overflow hole. The figure on the dais is actually a **Creature** animated by powerful magic to protect this room.

A wooden lever projecting from the floor near the east wall allows an operator looking through a peephole to activate or lock the trap in area **E7**. The stairs leading up to area **E9** bear a magical **Trap**.

Creature: The figure on the dais is a flesh golem created from the bodies of fallen battle champions and a tiger's head. The golem stands completely motionless, facing the hallway that exits to the east. The clothing and jewelry worn by the golem have been positioned to hide its stitches and scars. Its

final orders from the now long-dead priest who created it were to guard the chamber from intrusion by humanoids (except himself); the priest then fled south to prepare his own defenses against the mob that had risen up against the Grand Temple. As a result, the golem has not attacked the centaurs or quaggoths, since both are monstrous humanoids. Lucien suspects that the statue may be a golem, but hasn't figured out how to activate it.

Tiger-Headed Flesh Golem: hp 80; AC 20; *Monster Manual* 135.

Trap: The high priest of the Grand Temple prepared a *symbol of pain* specifically to ward against the military coup that forced him to retreat to this temple so long ago. As with the golem, the priest set the *symbol* to activate as soon as a humanoid looks upon it. None of the current inhabitants of the Grand Temple are aware of this trap, having never met the trigger conditions.

***Symbol of Pain* Trap**: CR 5; spell; spell trigger; no reset; spell effect (symbol of pain, 17th-level cleric, DC 28); multiple targets; Search DC 30; Disable Device 30.

Treasure: The golem wears a total of 40 thick gold bracelets worth 50 gp each. One of these is actually a *bracelet of protection* +2 (treat as a *ring of protection* +2). The tiger mask worn by the golem is a *mask of the tiger* (see sidebar). Lucien has been tempted several times to loot the golem, but has resisted so far for fear of activating its wrath.

Development: If the centaurs are prepared for the characters, Garth or Alza (or Lucien, if they haven't made it back to the Grand Temple) wait in this room when the PCs enter the Grand Temple, but then retreat to area **E9** after activating the pivoting floor trap.

E9. AUDIENCE CHAMBER OF THE GODS (EL 8)

A roiling sphere of light near the 20-foot-high vaulted ceiling casts irregular light upon this chamber. Huge figures that could only have been the gods of the temple builders decorate the walls from floor to ceiling. These carved images are incredibly detailed and remarkably well preserved, resplendent with gems and ornaments of silver and gold.

The sphere of light near the ceiling is a *continual flame* spell (CL 17) placed ages ago. The ancient priests of the Grand Temple used this chamber to hear the words of their high priest, who spoke to them from the 10-foot-high balcony to the south.

The high priest used the balcony to the south in his role as divine voice to pronounce the decrees and judgments of the gods to his congregation. The secret door leading to the balcony can be located with a successful Search check (DC 28).

Creatures: If Lucien isn't aware that the PCs are coming, he can be found in this room with Banta as the two finalize the specifics of their pact against Fort Akor. If Lucien has been warned, though, Garth and Alza are here as well to aid in his defense. In this case, Garth and Alza stand at the center of the room with their longbows ready. Lucien and Banta wait up on the balcony, where they discuss their alliance while awaiting the PCs' arrival.

Garth and Alza, Male and Female Centaurs (2): hp 32, 27; see encounter area **B**.

Banta, Male Quaggoth Bbn1: CR 4; Medium monstrous humanoid; HD 3d8+1d12+12; hp 40; Init +6; Spd 40 ft., climb 30 ft.; AC 16, touch 12, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +4; Grp +9; Atk +10 melee (1d4+5, claw); Full Atk +10 melee (1d4+5, 2 claws) and +4 melee (1d4+2, bite); SA Barbarian rage (1/day), quaggoth rage; SQ darkvision 60 ft., fast movement, fear immunity, scent; AL CE; SV Fort +6, Ref +5, Will +4; Str 20, Dex 14, Con 16, Int 9, Wis 12, Cha 11.

Quaggoth Rage (Ex): A quaggoth that takes damage in combat has a 1 in 6 chance of flying into a berserk rage the following round, dropping its longspear and clawing and biting madly until either it or its opponent is dead. It gains +4 Strength and –4 AC. The quaggoth cannot end its rage voluntarily.

Skills: Climb +13, Hide +5*, Intimidate +3, Jump +9, Survival +7.

Feats: Improved Initiative, Weapon Focus (claw).

Languages: Common.

Possessions: *Ring of jumping*, gold torc worth 200 gp, small hide sack containing 22 gems worth 10 gp each.

*+2 circumstance bonus on Hide checks in jungle areas due to camouflaged fur.

Lucien, Male Centaur Brd5: CR 7; Large monstrous humanoid; HD 4d8+5d6+9; hp 45; Init +3; Spd 50 ft.; AC 17, touch 13, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +7; Grp +13; Atk +10 melee (1d8+2/19-20, masterwork longsword) or +10 ranged (1d8+2/×3, composite longbow); Full Atk +10/+5 melee (1d8+2/19-20, masterwork longsword) or +10/+5 ranged (1d8+2/×3, composite longbow); SA fascinate; SD bardic music, bardic knowledge, countersong, darkvision 60 ft., inspire competence, inspire courage +1; AL CE; SV Fort +3, Ref +11, Will +8; AL NE; Str 14, Dex 16, Con 13, Int 14, Wis 11, Cha 16.

Skills: Bluff +13, Diplomacy +10, Disguise +3 (+5 acting), Hide +6, Intimidate +12, Jump +10, Listen +7, Move Silently +12, Perform (wind instruments) +18, Spot +7, Survival +7.

Feats: Persuasive, Skill Focus (perform), Spell Focus (Enchantment), Stealthy.

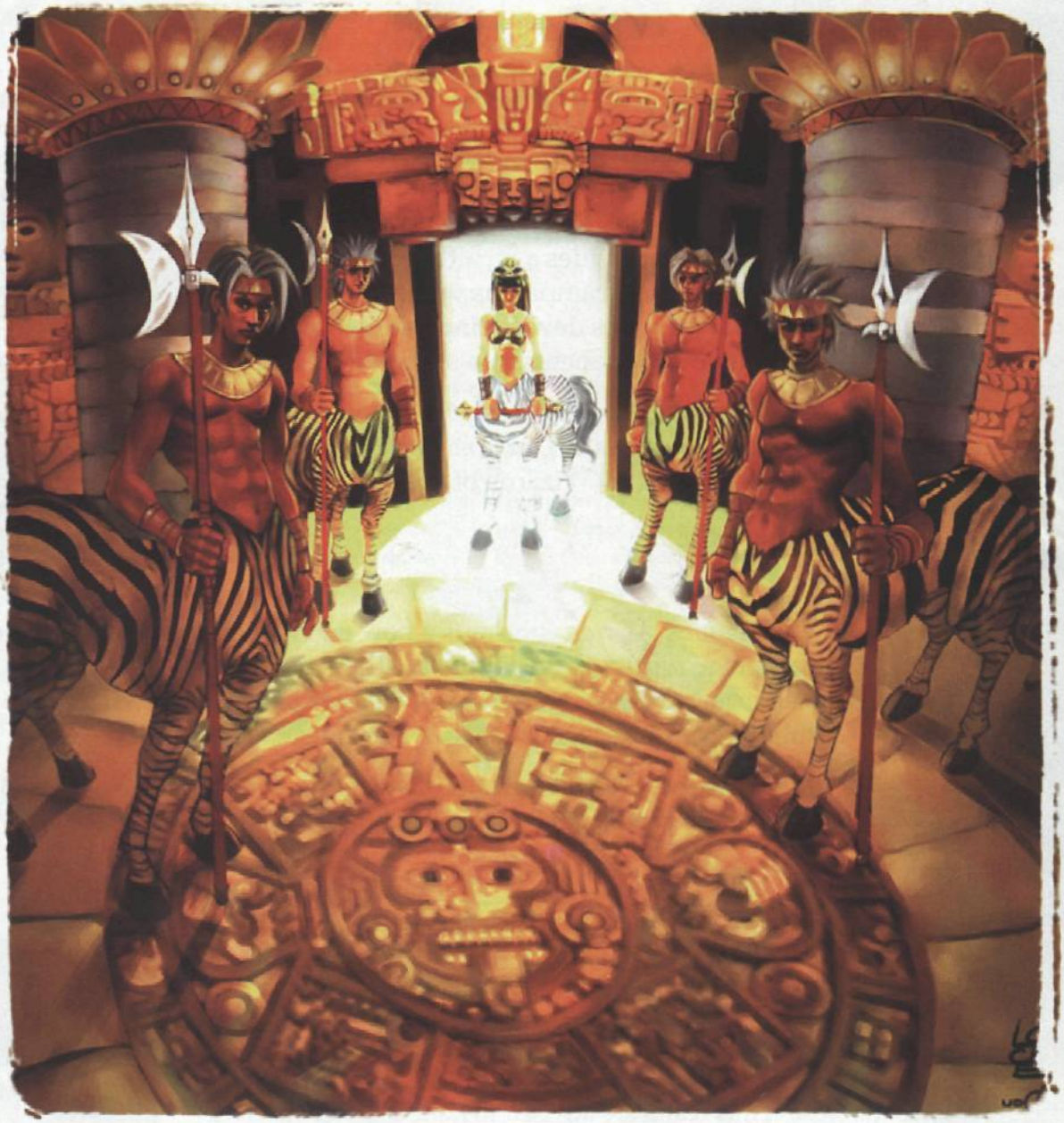
Languages: Common, Gnome, Elven, Sylvan.

Bard Spells Known (3/4/2; save DC 13 + spell level): 0—*dancing lights, detect magic, flare, ghost sound, know direction, summon instrument*; 1st—*charm person**, *silent image, Tasha's hideous laughter**, *ventriloquism*; 2nd—*deep slumber**, *invisibility, suggestion**.

*Enchantment spell; save DC 14 + spell level.

Possessions: Composite longbow (+2 Strength), quiver with 20 arrows, masterwork longsword, heavy wood shield, ivory flute worth 65 gp, dusty rose prism *ioun stone*, *wand of silence* (12 charges).

Tactics: Garth and Alza fire arrows at the PCs until they get close enough to attack in melee. They fight to the death to keep the PCs from reaching the balcony. Banta activates his barbarian rage, jumps down from the balcony, and rushes to attack any elves in the party. If there are no elves, Banta simply attacks the closest PC.



Lucien starts the battle by inspiring courage in his allies, although he chooses to end the song immediately so he can use his *wand of silence* on Banta, who voluntarily fails his saving throw against the wand's effects. The effects of the inspire courage bard song last for five more rounds. The following round, Lucien casts a *silent image* of a tiger that appears in puff of orange smoke. A character attacked by the illusory tiger in a *silenced* area does not receive a saving throw to disbelieve the illusion until he succeeds in striking the tiger (AC 12).

Lucien then fires at the PCs with his bow and casts *deep slumber* and *Tasha's hideous laughter* until they hit him in melee. When the *silence* spell ends, or if a PC reaches the balcony, Lucien casts *suggestion* on the PC he perceives as the most dangerous, suggesting that the character go try to touch the statue in area **E5**. Once engaged in melee, Lucien attacks the PCs with his longsword, fighting to the death to avenge his father.

Treasure: The gold and gems set into the walls of this room are worth a total of 12,000 gp. Extracting them requires 4 hours of work per 1,000 gp of material.

Development: If the PCs did not lock the floor trap, Cerra is forced to wait for their return (assuming she has allied with the PCs). If Cerra is present, she tries to discourage any looting, urging respect for the gods the Grand Temple was built to honor. Cerra is even willing to part with some of her personal treasure if the PCs require additional enticement to leave the temple's treasures unmolested. If the PCs insist on looting the temple, their actions weigh heavily on any future dealings with Cerra and her band.

PART IV: RETURN TO FORT AKOR

At this point in the adventure, the PCs face a decision on how to deal with Prince Henri. If they have slain the tyrannosaurus and the centaurs, they can return to the Fort to collect their rewards. If the PCs have allied with Cerra and the dinosaur and the centaurs still live, they can return with them to the fort to aid in the final raid on Fort Akor. Or, the PCs might try to serve as diplomats in an attempt to forge a lasting peace between the two groups. Details on all three of these scenarios appear below.

ALLYING WITH FORT AKOR

If the PCs slew the dinosaur and ended the centaur threat and decide to return to Fort Akor to report to the prince and collect the reward, they find the fort has undergone significant changes in their absence.

> The occupants of Fort Akor have not been idle in your absence. The 50 feet of cleared terrain beyond the fort's walls has increased significantly. Three large smoldering fires dominate the cleared area. The walls and main gate have been repaired, and a wooden cage hangs from the highest reaches of the gate itself.

During the day, the elves work with axes and machetes to clear more jungle from the surrounding terrain, toiling under the watchful guard of the soldiers. The cleared brush is stacked on one of several burn piles at the end of each day, and the fires burn through the night to provide more illumination. The Gate Tower itself (area **A3**) has been repaired up to 190 hit points.

Prince Henri ordered the clear cutting of the jungle to expand the fort's field of fire out to a quarter-mile radius. During the day, 27 elves (from area **A8**) toil, watched by 20 soldiers (from area **A6**) manning the palisade walkway. To help "motivate" the elf slaves, the prince ordered a cage built atop the ruined gatehouse and confined six of the more sickly or wounded elves inside. The prince made it clear to the elves that if the dragon attacked again and the soldiers were not able to drive it off, the caged elves would be its first victims. So far, the prince's threat has worked, but the elves are ready to revolt, given the opportunity to first save their caged kin.

If the PCs announce their return, Prince Henri sends Anna to verify that they have returned with the "dragon's" teeth. If the PCs cannot produce the teeth, Anna refuses them entry and orders them to return to the jungle and complete their mission. If the PCs have the teeth (or can fool Anna into thinking that they do) she orders a knotted rope thrown over the palisade and ushers the PCs directly to the prince's command hut (area **A5**).

> Prince Henri looks up from the papers on his desk and regards each one of you in turn before speaking. "Lieutenant Samos informs me that the dragon is dead. You have performed admirably, and for that you must be compensated." The prince then stands and turns to the crude map behind him. Taking a piece of chalk, the prince draws a semi-circle on the map surrounding Fort Akor. "These are your lands. How you divide them amongst yourselves is of no concern to me. I am prepared to grant a one month grace on your taxes, so I suggest you move quickly to subdue your lands and establish yourselves. You are dismissed."

Prince Henri once again leaves Anna to usher the PCs outside and handle any questions or problems. Anna and the prince have already discussed the PCs' return and she is well aware of his feelings regarding most subjects. If the PCs become belligerent, repeatedly interrupt the prince, or refuse to leave his hut, Anna summons the soldiers from the courtyard and has the PCs arrested. Gear is confiscated and prisoners are added to the elven slaves in area **A8**; anyone who causes more trouble is quickly executed. Prince Henri's guard joins the fight only if the PCs attempt to harm the prince himself.

If the characters are unhappy with their reward and request another form of payment, Anna quietly informs the PCs that, in his current situation, the prince is simply unable to offer anything else. Anna goes on to point out that the prince is allowing them to keep all the treasure they recovered, despite the fact that it was found on his lands and rightly belongs to him. If they continue to refuse the land grant, Anna expresses regret at their decision but admits that she is not surprised.

If the party accepts the land grant, Anna is noticeably surprised, but quickly recovers to express her pleasure at their decision. She informs the PCs that Prince Henri cannot aid them financially, but is ready to assist them in procuring any tools or materials they may need, at only 150% the standard price. If the PCs ask about borrowing elven workers, Anna replies that the prince is willing to consider it, but only once they begin paying taxes. Other requests for aid receive similar responses, as Prince Henri is unwilling to commit himself to the PCs until they show they are serious about developing their lands and serving his needs. If the PCs seriously pursue this option, it is up to you to develop their future with the prince.

ASSAULTING FORT AKOR

If the PCs have allied with Cerra, she approaches them once Lucien has been dealt with and asks them to continue to aid her people and elven allies. Specifically, she wants to continue with Lucien's plans, but without abusing the jungle's animals or allying with the quaggoths. If the PCs refuse to help her defeat Prince Henri and rescue the elves, Cerra stomps away in disgust, rounds up the surviving centaurs, and disappears into the jungle.

Once the truth behind Prince Henri's past and his current actions in the jungle become clear, a good-aligned party should decide to end his reign of slavery and cruelty on their own. While many of his soldiers are uncomfortable with this new edge of cruelty displayed by their lord, they remain loyal to him at this time, believing the strain and unjust nature of his

exile to be the culprit rather than any inherent cruelty in the prince's soul.

The characters could mount a direct assault on Fort Akor to defeat the prince, but doing so doubtless ends in the death of many otherwise innocent soldiers since they defend the fort bravely and loyally. Their numbers and fortified location also make them fairly difficult to assault, but any superior magic possessed by the PCs can tip the balance in their favor.

Perhaps the greatest ally the PCs can secure in a strike against the fort is the tyrannosaur. Spells like *dominate animal* or *charm animal* combined with wild empathy or *speak with animals* spells can secure the dinosaur's aid if the PCs can magically control it or adjust its attitude to helpful. Even if they can't, the dinosaur leaves on its own to attack the fort again 1d4+4 days after the adventure begins; the PCs can use this attack as a distraction to get inside the fort and remove Prince Henri from power.

If the PCs can free the wild elves from their imprisonment, they gladly aid them in attacking the fort, although they must first be armed and healed before they can be of much use.

If combat does occur at the fort, the soldiers respond quickly. Anna and the 30 off-duty soldiers arrive at the palisade walls in 1d4+4 rounds. All other soldiers on duty at the time stay at their posts until ordered elsewhere by Prince Henri or Anna. Prince Henri and his bodyguards arrive on the scene the round after Anna, but engage in combat only if attacked directly. If Prince Henri leads the soldiers, he continues the fight until outnumbered 2 to 1. If Anna is forced to assume command, she surrenders if simply outnumbered. Prince Henri fights to the death, but if he is defeated and Anna is either defeated or reduced to less than 10 hit points, the soldiers surrender.

DIPLOMATS AND ASSASSINS

A third option is to use diplomacy or stealth to arrive at a solution. The PCs could sneak into Fort Akor, either to assassinate the prince, rescue the elves, or simply to scout the place out. The soldiers aren't particularly observant, and take 10 on all Listen and Spot checks while on duty (for results of 9 in both cases). Even characters without stealthy skills have a fair chance at this tactic. There is no cover or concealment during the day in the clearing around the fort, but at night the darkness provides enough concealment that the characters can use the Hide skill to approach the fort. If the PCs decide to bypass the soldiers, they must cross the field of fire unseen, scale the palisade, and then slip past any patrols in order to accomplish their goals. A number of spells, such as *dimension door*, *fly*, *invisibility*, or *teleport* can render guards and walls ineffective, while spells such as *summon monster* and *phantasmal killer* could eliminate the need to enter the fort altogether. If the PCs lack access to this kind of magic, a combination of Move Silently, Hide, and Climb checks are requried.

The elves remain quite sick and exhausted, and until the six elves in the cage are freed they refuse to help the PCs. If the infiltrating PCs manage to catch the prince off guard, it takes only one round for his personal bodyguards to come to his aid, but it takes 1d4+4 rounds for Anna and the other soldiers to save him. If Prince Henri is taken out of the picture (such as by a successful assassination or kidnapping), Anna assumes the role of leader of Fort Akor. Free from Prince Henri's influence, she ceases the clear cutting activities and returns all of the elves to area **A8**. Once it becomes clear to her that the "dragon" attacks have stopped, she releases the elves and does her best to cultivate Fort Akor into a thriving outpost town. Despite this, she continues to mistrust the PCs and seeks to punish them for the assassination of Prince Henri unles they can adjust her attitude from hostile to something less antagonistic.

It is possible to overthrow Prince Henri non-violently by forcing the soldiers to realize his actions are needlessly evil and destructive. For this approach to be successful, the PCs must

SCALING THE ADVENTURE

"Dragon Hunters" is designed for a party of four 7th-level PCs, but it can be easily modified to make it suitable for groups of different levels using the following general guidelines.

5th- to 6th-level PCs

PCs of these levels may experience difficulty with some of the encounters in this adventure, particularly with the tyrannosaur. Decrease the number of opponents, NPC character levels, or their hit points (due to previous wounds not yet healed). Specific recommendations are as follows:

- Reduce the number of quaggoths in area **B** to 3, and have only Garth or Alza present. Reduce Cerra's druid level to 3.
- Replace the advanced tyrannosaur with a standard tyrannosaur, with wounds that lower its hit point total to 100.
- Replace the burnt othur fumes in the trap in area **E6** with insanity mist (*Dungeon Master's Guide*, p. 297).
- The flesh golem in area **E8** should still bear wounds from an ancient battle, reducing its hit points to 50. Remove its *bracelet of protection +2* entirely.
- Replace the centaurs' composite longbows with normal longbows, and decrease Lucien's bard level to 3.

8th- to 9th-level PCs

PCs of these levels should still find the adventure challenging as written, although you should still make a few minor revisions as suggested below:

- Increase the number of quaggoths in area **B** to 7. Increase Cerra's druid level to 6.
- Add three hit dice to the tyrannosaur per average party level above 7th.
- Replace the flesh golem with a clay golem and the ochre jelly with a black pudding.
- Add a ranger level to all of the non-classed centaurs, and increase Lucien's bard level to 7. Make Prince Henri's bodyguards 3rd-level fighters, Anna a 4th-level fighter, and Prince Henri himself a 2nd-level aristocrat/8th-level fighter.

somehow gain the ear of Anna and/or the soldiers and adjust their attitudes to helpful by using Diplomacy, Intimidate, or magic. If the prince is able to speak for himself, though, he uses his Intimidate skill to oppose the rhetoric of the PCs and tries to order his soldiers to attack them.

THE AFTERMATH

If an attempt to overthrow Prince Henri fails, the characters' fate depends on the prince's condition following the fighting. If he was killed, the PCs are tried for murder by the highest-ranking soldier and likely executed unless they can use Diplomacy to adjust the soldiers' hostile attitude to at least friendly. If during the battle the PCs caused great devastation to the fort or killed any soldiers, even the best Diplomacy check can't save them from execution. If the prince survives and the tyrannosaur is still a problem, he simply exiles the PCs from Fort Akor to finish the job. If the PCs have already dealt with the tyrannosaur, Prince Henri confiscates their possessions and tosses them in with the wild elves.

If the PCs succeed in overthrowing Prince Henri and wish for lasting peace in the jungle, they must deal with the problems that started the conflict in the first place. Bringing real stability to the area requires the PCs to take on the role of diplomats and propose a solution that considers the needs of all the area's inhabitants.

The wild elves insist that their people be treated as equals by the humans and demand to return to their village, though they realize that the human's military strength could be of benefit in light of the centaurs' diminished numbers. The centaurs are more difficult to satisfy since they continue to hold the soldiers fully responsible for the deaths of their kin, even after Prince Henri is removed from command. As compensation for their fallen comrades, the centaurs demand restitution be paid by the humans in gems and jewelry worth 3,000 gp, though this amount can be negotiated down to 1,500 gp if the PCs remind the centaurs that the tyrannosaur killed many of the soldiers as well. The centaurs are also willing to accept the expenditure of human lives necessary to destroy the Render tribe as restitution for their dead.

If the prince is dealt with, Anna steps in as the leader of the fort as described above. Alternately, the PCs could take this burden upon themselves. They may even appeal to the prince's homeland for assistance (especially if they were sent by his mother to check up on the situation), though this must be handled carefully if the PCs were responsible for the prince's death.

CONCLUSION

If the PCs decide to remain at Fort Akor, either as its guardians or as its rulers, there are many possibilities for future adventures. The Render quaggoths don't hold long to any treaty negotiated with the centaurs, and now that they know where Fort Akor is located they may become a problem. There is also the possibility that the tyrannosaur had a mate that followed her through the mountains, and is now out for vengeance or to expand his territory. Perhaps some other menace has found the subterranean passage through the Land's End Mountains and has come to see Fort Akor as a rival for control of the jungle. Finally, there may be other ruins from the ancient civilization that built the Grand Temple, waiting to be re-discovered. Who knows what ancient dangers lurk in these forgotten ruins? Ω

Chemical Engineer by day and gamer whenever he can, Peter Zollers lives with his wife Susan in the dragon-infested concrete jungles of Maryland.

Nodwick
by Aaron Williams
www.nodwick.com
YOU BEFRIENDED IT?
YEAH. WE JUST FED HER AND SHE WANTED TO BE PALS.
FED HER? WHAT DID YOU FEED HER?
OH, YOU KNOW. THE USUAL.
IT WAS FOR THE GREATER GOOD. THE BEAST ISN'T ENRAGED ANY MORE.
WELL...
WE'LL LET YOU NAME HER.
OOOH! HOW ABOUT "FLUFFY?" OR "TINKLES?"
IRONY STRIKES AGAIN, HUH?
SHUT UP, NODWICK

the DEMONSKAR LEGACY

BY TITO LEATI

ARTWORK BY MATT CAVOTTA AND JEFF CARLISLE
CARTOGRAPHY BY CHRISTOPHER WEST

INTRODUCTION

"The Demonskar Legacy" begins with a political crisis that threatens the security of the citizens of Cauldron, and turns into a desperate hunt for a missing paladin. This adventure is designed for a group of four 8th-level characters, and the PCs may reach 10th level by its conclusion. You can easily adjust the adventure for larger or smaller parties, as well as for PCs of higher or lower level (see the "Scaling the Adventure" sidebar). When the PCs earn enough experience to gain a higher level, allow them to advance during the course of the adventure.

The adventure takes place after the events of "Life's Bazaar" (DUNGEON #97), "Flood Season" (DUNGEON #98), and "Zenith Trajectory" (DUNGEON #102). If you're playing through these adventures in sequence, the heroes are familiar with the town of Cauldron and should recognize many of the NPCs in this adventure. You can also play "The Demonskar Legacy" as a stand-alone scenario, because it doesn't explicitly rely on knowledge gained from the previous adventures.

PREPARATION

Running "The Demonskar Legacy" requires the use of the revised versions of the *Player's Handbook*, DUNGEON MASTER's *Guide*, and *Monster Manual*, but you can use the older books without much difficulty. Some creatures in this adventure appear in the *Monster Manual II* and *Fiend Folio*, but their statistics are given in full in the text. Access to previous "Adventure Path" episodes (found in DUNGEON #97, #98, and #102) are highly recommended as well, since they contain useful information about the city of Cauldron, including a poster map of the city in issue #97.

As in previous episodes of the campaign, Campaign Seed sidebars are scattered throughout the adventure. Some of these will be developed further in future adventures in this series, while others serve as helpful points at which you can expand the adventure and make it your own.

BACKGROUND

Despite the onset of spring, unrest has spread through Cauldron's population. Taxes have been raised numerous times to help the city cope with damage caused by recent emergencies and to take precautions against further accidents during an eventful year. Since the last fiscal decree issued by Lord Mayor Navalant, taxes in Cauldron have become even higher than those in the much larger neighboring city, Sasserine. Protests and tax evasion are spreading. Visible benefits of the high taxes have yet to appear, and many Cauldronites grumble that the taxes are simply lining the pockets of the nobility.

In a way these feelings are justified, for in fact, the beholder Lord Orbius Vhalantru embezzles much of the collected money and uses it to fuel the wicked work of an outer planar faction called the Cagewrights and to pay the increasing number of mercenaries at his service. Cauldron's wealthiest citizens, whose taxes are collected first, are the first to suffer from the increases. Among these unhappy citizens is Maavu, a merchant whose warehouse was smashed by a fiendish umber hulk recently (see DUNGEON #102).

Today, dour tax collectors walk the city streets, invariably accompanied by patrols of heavily armed and ruthless half-orc mercenaries. Rumors circulate of special squads of the town guard that break into private houses, workshops, and stores to search for hidden goods, money, or other valuables. The captain of the town guard, Terseon Skellerang, recently announced special security measures against a sect of dangerous anarchists believed to be plotting to overthrow the city government. The lord mayor, for his part, has been quite absent lately, rarely showing up in public and leaving most matters to his collaborators. Lord Orbius Vhalantru figures prominently among the lord mayor's newest advisors. The beholder appears in public rarely, and does so disguised as an elf sorcerer of great wealth. On these occasions, Vhalantru is accompanied by a prominent cult leader of the Cagewrights by the name of Thifirane, a human transmuter who supplies him with the magic he needs to maintain his alternate form.

ENTER ALEK TERCIVAL

While chaos advances, a champion of good has been chosen by fate to play an important role in Cauldron's future. Heir to one of the city's greatest families, Alek Tercival became a paladin

after his father's death left him destitute. With the assistance of his childhood friend Jenya Urikas (now the high priestess of Cauldron's Temple of St. Cuthbert), Alek joined the church of St. Cuthbert with a strong (if rather flamboyant) passion. Alek's advancement in the church has been painfully slow, but throughout it all his devotion has remained strong.

Three years ago, after a few adventures in the wilderness around Cauldron, Alek managed to slay an incredibly old ogre near the village of Redgorge. In the monster's lair, he found a thin silver plate etched with odd drawings and characters. On the back of the plate the ogre had scratched a crude map to an underground ruin called "Vaprak's Voice," set on the rim of a geological rift called the Demonskar. Intrigued, Alek set out from the village of Redgorge and rode westward across the dense jungle, heedless of the terrible rumors about his destination. After a dangerous journey to the Demonskar's rim, Alek discovered a pair or enormous, truncated tubes jutting from the surface. A tremendous, echoing bellow issues from these tubes when the wind sweeps the area, earning the place its name. After a bit of exploration, he found a passage leading into ancient subterranean ruins, built ages ago by a cabal of evil spell weavers (*Monster Manual II* 187).

Alek Tercival was not the only recent visitor to Vaprak's Voice. A covey of three half-fey greenhags had inhabited the place for months, spending their nights unraveling many of the ruin's ancient secrets. Shortly after their arrival, they received a visit from the master of the Demonskar, a glabrezu named Nabthatoron. The hags recognized the demon's superiority and swore to serve him as vassals. Nabthatoron confided in the the hags that he and his retinue were abandoned on the Material Plane five centuries ago, after a terrible battle with the early human colonists of the area. The colonists (the original founders of Redgorge) routed the demons, and an unknown demon lord held Nabthatoron personally responsible. Nabthatoron was thus banished to the Material Plane for as long as Redgorge remained unconquered by the forces of chaos.

On a recent visit to Vaprak's Voice, Nabthatoron learned about the Cagewrights and their plans to draw Cauldron into the infernal plane of Carceri. Although he still lacks details on this plan, the glabrezu knows that whatever disaster the Cagewrights have planned for Cauldron would surely affect Redgorge as well, making his long-desired conquest all the easier. For the first time in centuries, the demon feels his exile on the Material Plane may be drawing to a close.

When Alek arrived at Vaprak's Voice, Nabthatoron was present, meeting with the covey. The demon saw an opportunity in Alek's visit, and ordered the hags to spare the paladin's life if they could take control of him in some way. Obedient to the demon's will, the hags used their *mind blank*, *mirage arcana*, and *veil* abilities to assume the appearance of a trio of trumpet archons. Fooled by the covey's powerful deception, the paladin fell on his knees before them, overcome with awe.

From the false archons, Alek learned of the Demonskar's apocalyptic history, and of another apocalyptic event that would soon devastate the region (the transformation of Cauldron into a gate-town to Carceri). Although the "trumpet archons" knew about the forthcoming disaster, they did not say exactly what would happen. Pressed by Alek on the matter, they led him to an artifact called the *Starry Mirror*, informing him that it was an ancient oracular device which could give great insights to anyone bold enough to discover its secrets. In reality, the hags just wanted someone to take the risk of testing the ancient artifact. They lied to Alek, telling him that the *Starry Mirror's* divinatory powers would function only for someone who had proven his purity, and that they had for him a set of tasks to do just that.

At the end of the visit, the false archons gave Alek a chalice filled with *Amaranth Elixir*, a strength-enhancing draught used by the ancient spell weavers who built Vaprak's Voice. After drinking it, Alek became much more physically powerful and reckless. As the *Amaranth Elixir* dimmed his wisdom, the "archons" told him that he had been chosen to play the role of savior of the land. They warned him to keep his meeting with them a secret to everyone until the right moment, so the forces of evil could not strike against him. With this last recommendation, the "archons" gave Alek a *cloak of resistance +1*, with the covey's *hag eye* set in the clasp, allowing the hags to monitor his actions.

This final step done, the hags sent Alek back into the world as their unwitting agent. They use their *dream* ability to communicate to Alek and direct his actions, all at the behest of Nabthatoron. Unbeknownst to Alek, these "missions" are in fact designed to allow the hags to track down the location and leaders of the Chisel.

THE CHISEL

The Chisel is a secret organization of rich merchants and artisans. Based in the Stonemason District of Redgorge, the Chisel was founded ages ago by the same heroes who defeated Nabthatoron's original assault on the region. Descendants of these heroic colonists, most members of the Chisel are quite powerful and skilled individuals.

Although the original intent of the society was to do good for the region, the Chisel has in recent times shifted to a more selfish demeanor. Most of the Chisel's energy is now spent on improving the economic and political interests of its members. Recent events in Cauldron pushed the Chisel to investigate the problems facing the city, more out of a need to protect the monetary interests of the region than out of a desire to do good. The intelligence activity of one of the group's most influential members, a merchant named Maavu, was recently discovered and punished by Vhalantru (see "Zenith Trajectory," DUNGEON #102). Maavu was forced to leave the city to avoid further misfortune.

While Vhalantru managed to subvert Cauldron's Last Laugh thieves' guild, the Chisel has resisted such corruption and has become a thorn in the side of the Cagewrights. For this reason,

Vhalantru has been rallying the lord mayor and Terseon Skellerang against Maavu and his associates. When the adventure begins, Skellerang is already planning a large-scale police operation in Redgorge, in which he hopes to crush the Chisel once and for all.

After his quick departure, Maavu escaped to Redgorge. There, he met with two leaders of the Chisel, the Foreman and the Honest Minstrel, to deliberate on the situation. On this occasion, the conspirators had a special guest: Alek Tercival, sent by *dreams* from the hags to infiltrate the Chisel. With his magically acquired might and pride, Alek impressed the others so much that they agreed to help him in his "battle against evil" in Cauldron, although his story of an impending catastrophe left them puzzled and skeptical.

In Maavu's opinion, a good start to restore a righteous government in Cauldron would be to replace the town administrators with trusted people (that is, members of the Chisel). To this end, using his knowledge of the city legalities, Maavu devised a plan to remove the current captain of the town guard and put Alek in his place. According to an ancient law known as the Old Law of Peers, the five noblest families of Cauldron (after the lord mayor) have the right to challenge the captain of the town guard if they believe his behavior to be unworthy or immoral. Thanks to his ancestry, Alek happens to be among the few who can issue such challenge (the other nobles being the Taskerhills, the Lathenmires, the Aslaxins, and the Vanderborens). Satisfied with Maavu's plan, and inspired further by *dreams* sent by the hags, the impatient Alek wrote a letter of challenge to Terseon Skellerang. At the end of the meeting, the members of the Chisel, including Maavu, set out to deliver the letter and organize the plan, while Alek went back to Vaprak's Voice to prepare for the duel.

Unfortunately for Alek, now that he has played his part in planting this seed of chaos, he is of no more use to Nabthatoron. The glabrezu allowed the hags to dispose of him as they wished. When Alek returned to prepare for the duel, they approached him in the guise of the archons and told him he had earned the right to use the *Starry Mirror* to divine the future of Cauldron. They took back their *hag eye* and led Alek to the *Starry Mirror*. Alek eagerly stepped into the *Starry Mirror*, hoping to arm himself with knowledge on how to stave off Cauldron's doom, but found himself instead trapped in a maze of mirrors. For the next several days, he wandered the mirror maze aimlessly, searching for the divinatory powers the "archons" had promised him. As the days wore on, madness began to worm its way into his mind. The thought that his "archon" allies had abandoned him to this endless maze soon consumed his every thought. When, through pure luck, he stumbled out of the maze and into an ancient spell weaver vault from which there was no apparent escape, his mind finally snapped.

And 500 miles away, in Cauldron, the challenge he issued is blossoming into chaos…

ADVENTURE SYNOPSIS

The merchants of Cauldron organize a demonstration before the City Hall to protest against the recent abuses of the authorities, who have raised taxes and strengthened the city wall with half-orc mercenaries. During the demonstration, Maavu speaks out against the city government, revealing that the protector of the Temple of St. Cuthbert, Alek Tercival, has challenged the captain of the town guard, who is in part responsible for the recent abuse, to a legal duel. When a patrol of the town guard comes to arrest Maavu, a riot erupts. During the riot, a breathdrinker summoned by the Cagewrights attempts to kill Maavu, and the PCs must save him to gain useful information about the Chisel.

Following Maavu's directions, the PCs travel to Redgorge and meet the high handcrafters of the Chisel. Alek Tercival was also invited to the meeting, but the paladin fails to show up. The chief of the Chisel believes that the paladin knows

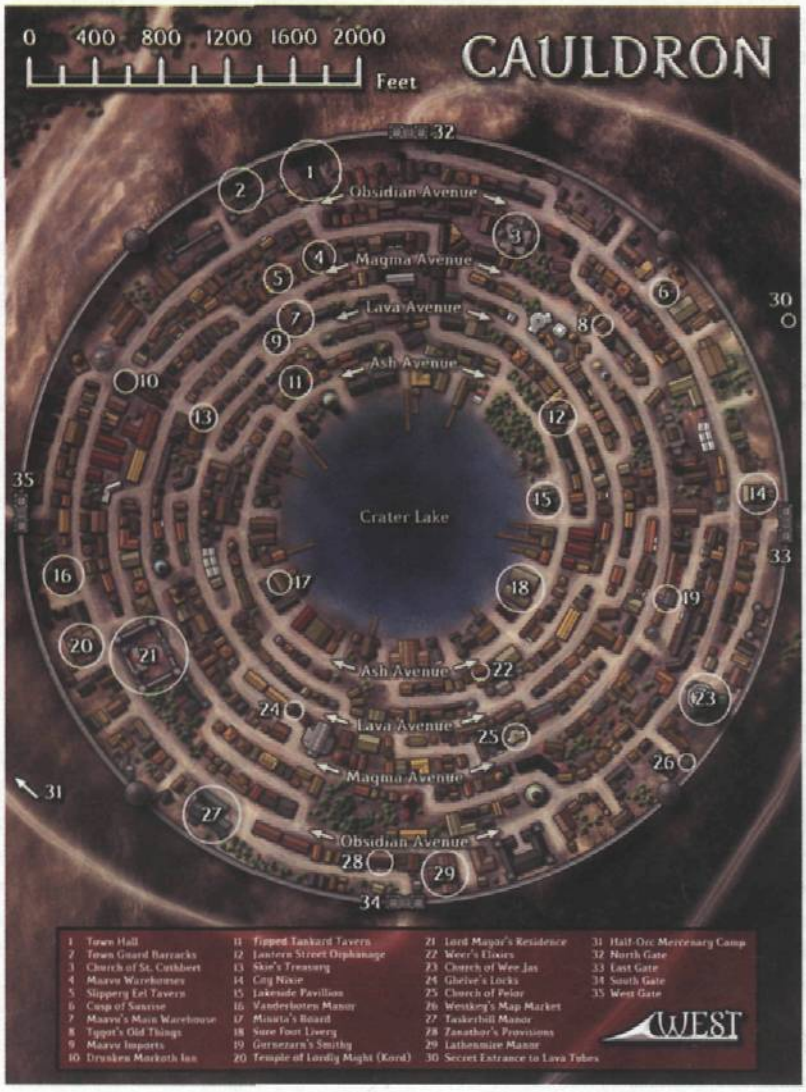
THE STORY SO FAR...

After the perils of the flood season, spring has come to Cauldron. A warmer sun shines brightly on the roofs of the city, bringing a little joy to its worried inhabitants. Nevertheless, persistent fears inspired by recent events lurks in Cauldron's alleys, sewers, and ancient buildings as the Cagewrights secretly further their plan of opening a permanent portal to Carceri within the city itself. The most prominent ally of these cultists, the beholder Vhalantru, subtly keeps the city under his control while posing as an influential advisor to the lord mayor. With his help, and with the aid of other evil groups like the Ebon Triad (see "Flood Season," in *Dungeon* #98), the Cagewrights are creating *soulcages*, artifacts necessary for opening the *gate* to Carceri, and placing them in secret locations throughout the city. The Cagewrights are also gathering the Shackleborn (creatures that bear the naturally invisible Carcerian Sign on their faces), sacrificial victims destined to be imprisoned in the *soulcages*.

In "Life's Bazaar" (*Dungeon* #97), the PCs disrupted a kidnapping ring based in an ancient fortress deep beneath the city. One of the kidnapped children was in fact one of the Shackleborn, and his rescue pleased Vhalantru greatly.

In "Flood Season" (*Dungeon* #98) the PCs retrieved several stolen *wands of control water* needed by Cauldron's clergy to control the rising waters of the central lake during the winter rainstorms, overcoming several members of the Ebon Triad in the process.

In "Zenith Trajectory" (*Dungeon* #102), the PCs' heroic actions against a rampaging umber hulk in the middle of the city caught the attention of the Cagewrights. Several of their agents tricked the unknowing PCs into returning another of the Shackleborn, the dwarf hero Zenith Splintershield, to Cauldron and the Cagewrights' clutches.



something of decisive importance and wants the PCs to find him. To find Alek Tercival, the heroes must use the information gathered thus far, and follow a very old map found in an antique shop. When they finally track Alek to Vaprak's Voice, they encounter the covey of half-fey hags who have been manipulating the paladin. After defeating the hags, the PCs navigate through the *Starry Mirror* to free Alek Tercival from a deadly trap. At the end, the PCs must battle the terrible creature that has schemed to turn the paladin into a pawn of chaos, Nabthatoron the glabrezu himself.

CAULDRON

The town of Cauldron is detailed the previous episodes of the Shackled City Adventure Path (see DUNGEON #97, DUNGEON #98, and DUNGEON #102). If you don't have access to the other installments of the campaign, refer to the brief description presented below.

Built over the rim of a dormant volcano, Cauldron consists of four concentric avenues centered on a central lake. The outer city walls feature four gates at the cardinal points, each one leading to a steep, winding road down to the lowlands below. The city buildings, made of volcanic rock and wood from the nearby forests, are packed around the main avenues and the docks of the central lake, which the local clerics keep clean with magic.

The map of Cauldron shows important locations in this adventure and the previous ones. The section around City Hall has been reproduced in detail, to accommodate the first episode of the adventure. Observant readers will note that the alignment of Cauldron's power center has shifted from neutral good to lawful neutral; this is a result of Vhalantru's growing control and influence over the town. The majority of Cauldron's citizens remain predominantly good aligned. Note also that many of the important characters in town have gained a few experience levels since the previous adventure.

Cauldron (large town): Conventional; AL LN; population 4,500 adults, 3,000 gp limit; Assets 600,000 gp; Mixed (78% human, 9% halfling, 5% gnome, 3% dwarf, 2% elf, 2% half-orc, 1% half-elf). Note that the half-orc population has recently grown with the arrival of Lord Vhalantru's half-orc mercenaries.

Authority Figures: Lord Mayor Severen Navalant, male human Ari10, Terseon Skellerang, male human Ftr10 (captain of the town guard).

Important Characters: Lord Orbius Vhalantru, beholder (true overlord of Cauldron); Jenya Urikas, female human Clr8 (cleric at the Church of St. Cuthbert); Meerthan Eliothlorn, male half-elf Wiz13 (member of the Striders of Fharlanghn staying at the Drowning Morkoth Inn); Shensen Tesseril, female half-drow Mnk1/Brd1/Drd6 (member of the Striders of Fharlanghn staying in the copse of trees near the Lakeside Pavilion); Keygan Ghelve, male gnome Exp3/Wiz (Ill)1 (owner of Ghelve's Locks); Gretchyn Tashykk, female halfling Com1 (Lantern Street Orphanage headmistress); Vortimax Weer, male human Wiz10 (alchemist and potion brewer at Weer's Elixirs); Skie Aldersun, female gnome Sor6 (proprietor of Skie's treasury); Phalian Gurnezarn, male human Exp6 (blacksmith and proprietor of Gurnezarn's Smithy); Bjellkir Zanathor, male human Com3 (proprietor of Zanathor's Provisions, a general store); Rivek Mol, male human Rog1/Exp4 (proprietor of the Tipped Tankard); Halpeen Welvihk, male human Exp6 (proprietor of the Drunken Morkoth Inn); Tippys Surefoot, female halfling Exp5 (proprietor of Sure Foot Livery); Kristof Jur-

gensen, male human Clr4 (cleric at the Shrine of Pelor); Embril Aloustinai, human female Wiz5/Clr9/Mystic Theurge 1 (high priest of the Cathedral of Wee Jas); Ike Iverson, human male Clr9 (cleric at the cathedral of Wee Jas); Asfelkir Hranleurt, male half-orc Clr8 (high priest of the Temple of Lordly Might, dedicated to Kord); Annah Taskerhill, human female Ari1/Brd8 (noble leader of the Stormblades); Cora Lathenmire, human female Ari1/Ftr8 (noble member of the Stormblades); Todd Vanderboren, human male Ari1/Rog7/Asn1 (member of the Stormblades and adopted son of local nobles); Zachary Aslaxin II, human male Ari1/Rgr4/Clr4 (noble member of the Stormblades); Artus Shemwick, human male Rog7 (fence and information broker working as a cook at the Tipped Tankard), Skylar Krewis, human male Ftr4 (sergeant in the town guard); Celeste, "human female," class unknown (mysterious beautiful woman often found at the Cusp of Sunrise dinner club).

Typical Guard Patrol: Vhalantru made town patrols bigger and meaner with the introduction of the half-orc mercenaries. A typical patrol consists of a human sergeant (War4), 1d8+2 human privates (War2), and 1d4+2 half-orc fighters (Ftr2). Guards typically wear breastplates and bucklers emblazoned with the town emblem (a watchful eye wreathed in flames) and carry masterwork halberds, longswords, and shortbows. The sergeant has two *potions of cure light wounds* and a *potion of sanctuary*. After the recent umber hulk incident (see "Zenith Trajectory"), a security platoon constantly patrols the avenues. The platoon

RUMORS IN CAULDRON

As usual, a wide range of rumors are circulating in Cauldron. Note that a few rumors from the previous episodes of the Adventure Path are very pertinent to "The Demonskar Legacy" (rumor #7 from "Flood Season" and rumors #3, #4, and #6 from "Zenith Trajectory"). These days, the tax increase remains the most prominent topic in town. After the riot occurs, a successful Gather Information check (DC 10) allows a character to uncover one of the following rumors.

d12 roll	Rumor
1	When Maavu the merchant fled the riot, a group of half-orc thugs chased him on the road to Sasserine. (False, although agents of the Chisel are spreading this rumor. Maavu in fact fled to Redgorge.)
2	Centuries ago, the first human colonists to settle the Cauldron region were led by Surabar Spellmason, the most powerful earth elementalist of all time. He freed the region from demons and put the volcano under Cauldron to sleep. (True, assuming the history of your campaign does not feature a more powerful earth elementalist already. Surabar Spellmason was a hero, a philosopher, and the inspirer of the Chisel.)
3	A cutpurse named Nibocha saw a doppelganger near the Tipped Tankard Tavern. Nibocha became aware of the creature's nature when she tried to pick the doppelganger's pocket. (True, the cutpurse tried to pick the pocket of Gortio, a doppelganger at Vhalantru's service, see *Dungeon* #102.)
4	The town guard found a spellbook in Maavu's house filled with earth elemental spells, including one that could have summoned the umber hulk that assaulted Cauldron recently. (Partially true, but the book found in his house was planted by agents of Vhalantru.)
5	Three weeks ago, a gnome peddler named Flismatt met Alek Tercival at the Lucky Monkey. The paladin was helping the carpenters to repair the building, and helping them indeed. He could split logs with his bare hands and carry an elephant's load on his back! (True, although Alek's performance is a bit exaggerated. His augmented physical power derives from the *Amaranth Elixir*.)
6	Three months ago, Alek Tercival met with the Stormblades while they were playing a home version of "snatch the gem" at the Drunken Morkoth Inn. The paladin did not join in the game ("an immoral pursuit"), but amazed everyone pulverizing a bone, eight-sided die with his bare hand. (True, one of the *dreams* sent by the hag covey led Alek to find out if the Stormblades had any information about how to contact the Chisel; they were unable to help and insulted Alek in the process.)
7	The City Council raised the taxes to buy a powerful artifact that will permanently protect Cauldron from future floods. (False, although Vhalantru's agents are spreading this rumor. The Cagewrights need extra money to finance the construction of the last few *soulcages*.)
8	Lord Orbius Vhalantru, one of the Lord Mayor's most trusted advisors, was recently tasked with protecting Cauldron from future disasters. (True, although the beholder's plans for Cauldron have little to do with protecting it.)
9	The crater known as the Demonskar is polluted with smoke seeping from the Abyss. (False, although the fumaroles found there support this old superstition.)
10	The Last Laugh is preparing the assassination of prominent members of the City Council. (False, the Last Laugh is generally happy with the current officials and with Lord Orbius Vhalantru.)
11	A group of duergar have come to the tunnels below Cauldron. They seek revenge against the heroes who disrupted that slave ring late last year. (False, but this rumor might make the PCs worry about their encounter with Kazmojen and Pyllrak Shyraat, see *Dungeon* #97.)
12	Terseon Skellerang is preparing a special task force to raid Redgorge. He thinks that a group of dangerous conspirators have their base there. (True, Terseon Skellerang fears the Chisel, who have a secret hideout in Redgorge.)

consists of a human lieutenant (Ari6, one of the trusted officers of the lord mayor), two half-orc sergeants (Ftr4), and 10+2d6 half-orc fighters (Ftr2). The platoon is 75% likely to include a cleric of Wee Jas (Clr3) and a wizard (Wiz3). The Magical Threats Agency (see "Zenith Trajectory") has a few spellcasting agents keeping watch on the town at all times, too (including Haanu Pershai, female gnome Ftr2/Sor6, their captain).

Healing: The PCs are likely to be very popular in the town at this point, and they are probably close friends with Jenya Urikas, the priestess of St. Cuthbert, and Shensen Tesseril, a druid and member of the Striders of Fharlanghn. Healing items and potions should be available to them at a 20% discount at the Church of St. Cuthbert. Moreover, Jenya Urikas can make higher-level clerical scrolls (such as *raise dead*) available for 1,000 gp per spell level. Shensen lacks Jenya's resources, but she is willing to prepare and cast any druid spells the PCs desire (assuming they remain allies). The temples of Kord and Pelor appreciate what the PCs have done for Cauldron but nonetheless still charge regular prices for their services. The clerics of the cathedral of Wee Jas charge 120% regular prices for their services, since their clerics tend to see the heroes as troublemakers; they have few qualms about making their unfavorable opinions known.

CHAPTER ONE: CHAOS IN THE STREETS

A huge demonstration is scheduled to take place around the City Hall on the morning this adventure begins. More than 700 citizens (most of them merchants) gather in the streets near City Hall to protest against the tax increases. Try to encourage the PCs to attend the demonstration; if they don't, the adventure can continue but they'll have to piece together what happened during the riot from second-hand sources. Some possible hooks to get the PCs to attend are listed below.

- Jenya Urikas heard that Alek Tercival is going to be at the demonstration, and since she won't be able to make it she asks the PCs to go in her place, contact Alek, and ask him to come visit her at the Church of St. Cuthbert. Alek's been out of contact for some time, and Jenya is growing worried for her friend.
- The Striders of Fharlanghn have been keeping tabs on the Cagewrights, and Meerthan Eliothlorn fears that they might take advantage of the demonstration to further their agenda somehow. He sends Shensen Tesseril (from "Flood Season") to the event to keep an eye on things; if she is allied with the party or has been developing a deeper relationship with one of the PCs, she asks them to come with her to the demonstration for companionship and support.
- If the PCs are still on good terms with Celeste (from "Zenith Trajectory"), she contacts them and offers one of them a pouch of 50 pp to simply go to the demonstration for her; she is too busy to attend but says that she'd like to have someone trustworthy there to observe and later report to her the gist of the proceedings. Once the riot is over, however, she is nowhere to be found; her true reasons for sending the PC to the demonstration should remain unclear and mysterious.
- As the PCs relax at the Tipped Tankard (or anywhere else, for that matter) a large mob of loud and angry people passes by. Mention of "taxes" and "thugs" and other topics can be heard in the din. One of the members of the mob recognizes the PCs and asks them if they're going to the demonstration as well.

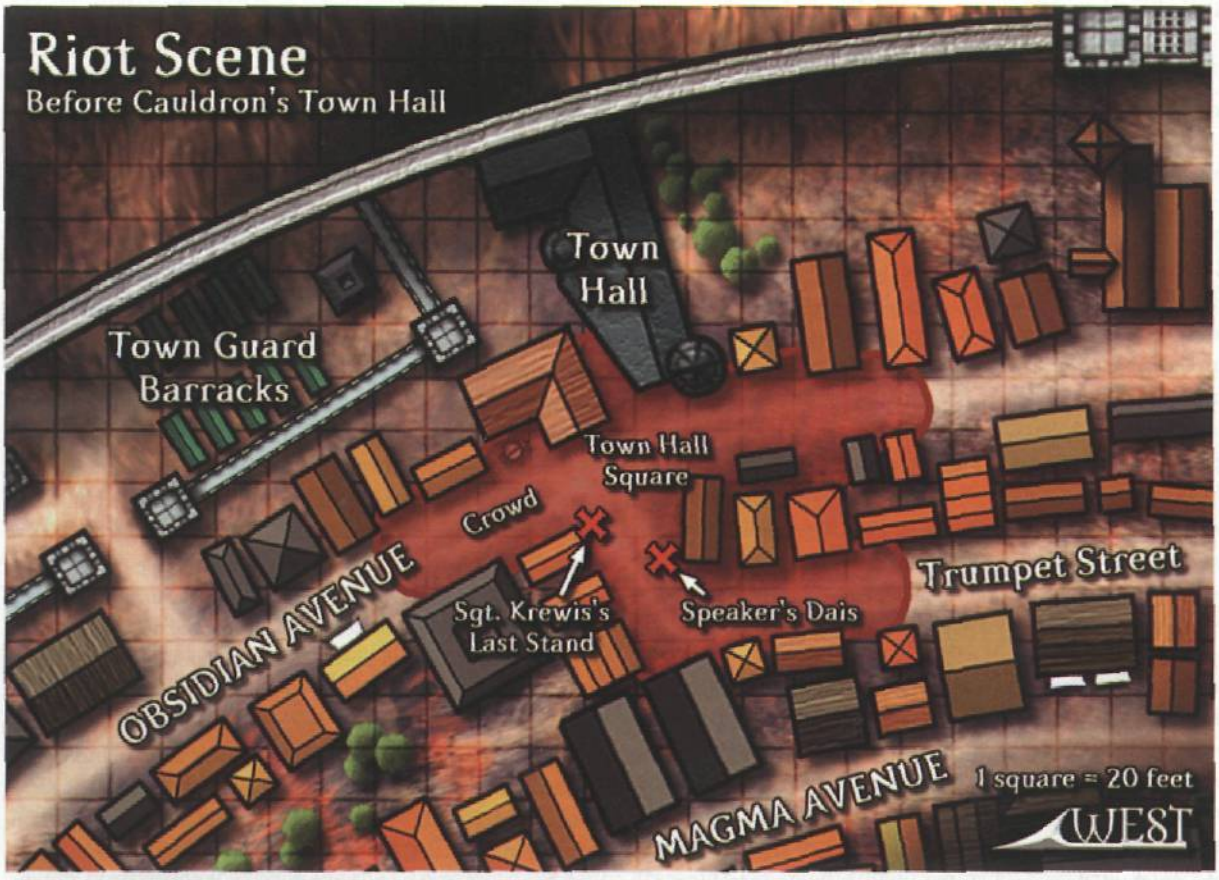
THE CAULDRON TAX RIOT (EL 8)

The demonstration against the tax increases, although somewhat spontaneous, was largely inspired by the Chisel, which has several affiliates among the crowd (including Maavu). The Chisel intends to make clear that Cauldron's population is not going to tolerate further abuses from the authorities. The Last Laugh, however, has learned about the programs of the Chisel from an informant, and has prepared a countermove to get rid of competition in Cauldron (see below).

> The streets around the City Hall are packed tight with loud citizens rallying against the recent tax increase in Cauldron. Several guards stand in a ring around the building and use the hafts of their halberds to keep people out. Presently, a small group of dignitaries, easily recognizable as the town tax collectors, make their way to the entrance. The citizens boo and scream insults at the tax collectors as they scuttle inside the building.

After the tax collectors have gone inside, Maavu climbs a prominent dais to speak. The merchant raises a hand and the demonstrators calm down a bit. After a moment of silence, Maavu addresses the audience resolutely. The merchant says that the Lord Mayor has received a letter of challenge, in which the noble Alek Tercival, paladin of St. Cuthbert, challenges the captain of the town guard, Terseon Skellerang, to prove his valor in a duel according to the Old Law of Peers. Maavu points out that the challenge has not been publicized by the City Council, which is itself illegal by the laws of the city and proof of the ill will the lord mayor's advisors bear the citizens. Maavu is a skilled orator, and the crowd becomes more and more angry as he speaks. When his words became too bold, a watch sergeant named Skylar Krewis rushes out of the City Hall to stop him. Read the following:

> The words of the fervor-filled merchant continue to imbue the citizens with a mounting rage. The people's anger culminates when Maavu points out the fact that a group of armed half-orcs is already harassing the town: "Skellerang is feeding a band of filthy half-orc thugs a large share of our bread!" he screams. Then, wading in the crowd of people, a human watch sergeant escorted by several half-orc mercenaries approaches the dais to arrest the merchant: "In the name of Terseon Skellerang, Captain of the Town Guard, I must arrest you!" he declares, addressing Maavu.
>
> Suddenly, from within the angered crowd, an unassuming



youth draws a hidden dagger and screams out, "Let's kill these half-orc brigands!" As his voice is drowned out by the roar of a hundred other people, the lad lunges at the nearest half-orc. In seconds, the mob erupts into a full-fledged riot.

The boy is a skilled provocateur of the Last Laugh (Rog4), one of many in the crowd. These provocateurs have been ordered to stir up a riot before the City Hall so the responsibility falls on Maavu and his associates.

The guards are badly outnumbered by the demonstrators, and Sergeant Krewis is rapidly cut off by the mob. Reinforcements are not likely to appear before he is beaten to death. If he is to be rescued, it is up to the PCs to save him. Meanwhile, an unknown villain has been observing the scene from an upper window of City Hall, and has summoned a breathdrinker to teach a lesson to Maavu (see below).

As with the umber hulk attack in "Zenith Trajectory," this encounter is quite complex. As usual, the actual outcome of the events depends on the party's actions. A round-by-round breakdown of the riot's progress appears below in **Tactics**.

Creatures: The most prominent NPCs involved in the riot are Maavu, Sergeant Krewis, and the breathdrinker. The supporting cast comprises the following: City Hall guards (War2, see also the description of the typical watch patrol in "Cauldron"), minor agents of the Last Laugh and the Chisel (Exp1 or Rog1), and simple demonstrators (Com 1). For sake of ease, you can treat all of these factors as one "crowd" that takes its actions on an initiative rank determined by a 1d20 roll. Other important NPCs may be present as well, as you desire.

Maavu figures among the highest-ranking members of the Chisel. In addition to being a skilled merchant, he is also a wizard in the tradition of Surabar Spellmason, the legendary leader of the first human settlers of the region. Maavu is tall, handsome, and intelligent. He has a heroic streak in his personality, inspired by the Chisel's early history, and is unusually generous with the destitute. He despises "illiberal" laws, and constantly tries to outflank them to his own advantage. Although more than 50 years old, he still has the voice and manners of a young, energetic man. Maavu's familiar (a rat named Ollie) died during the umber hulk attack.

Krewis is a loyal and brave young man, and although he serves under Terseon Skellerang, he is a fair-minded and understanding soldier. After a brief but fruitful adventuring experience, he started his new career to settle down and marry in Cauldron. Like all soldiers, Krewis must follow orders, but if the heroes save him, he could become a useful ally among Cauldron's enforcers.

The breathdrinker is an ordinary member of its species, summoned by a Cagewright within City Hall and enhanced with wizard spells (see below). Its orders are simply to track Maavu and make short work of him.

Maavu Arlintal, Male Human Exp5/Wiz4/Hgh1: CR 9; *Medium humanoid; HD 6d6+4d4+9;* hp 42; *Init +0;* Spd 30 ft.; AC 13, touch 10, flat-footed 13; Base Atk +5; Grap +5; Atk/Full Atk +5 melee (1d4, dagger); SA spells; SQ improved skill focus +4, planned save +1; AL CG; SV Fort +5, Ref +2, Will +11; Str 11, Dex 11, Con 13, Int 15, Wis 12, Cha 14.

Skills: Bluff +11, Concentration +8, Craft (alchemy) +19, Craft (weaving) +12, Diplomacy +18, Gather Information +13, Knowledge (architecture and engineering) +7, Knowledge (local) +7, Knowledge (the planes) +7, Listen +7, Profession (merchant) +10, Ride +5, Sense Motive +3, Spot +5, Spellcraft +8.

Feats: Brew Potion, Negotiator, Scribe Scroll, Skill Focus (Craft, alchemy), Skill Focus (Craft, weaving), Skill Focus (Diplomacy).

Languages: Common, Terran.

Wizard Spells Prepared (4/4/3; base DC 12 plus spell level): 0—*detect magic, mage hand, mending, open/close;* 1st—*mage armor, shield, shocking grasp, spider climb;* 2nd—*glitterdust, endurance.*

Spellbook: 0—all; 1st—*alarm, comprehend languages, detect secret doors, identify, mage armor, shield, shocking grasp, spider climb, unseen servant;* 2nd—*bear's endurance, glitterdust, knock, locate object, see invisibility.*

Possessions: Dagger, traveler's outfit, *bracers of armor +3, Heward's handy haversack* with food and wine for three days, two *potions of gaseous form, elixir of hiding,* scroll of *expeditious retreat,* 45 gp and 5 pearls (worth 100 gp each).

Sergeant Skylar Krewis, Male Human Ftr4: CR 4; Medium humanoid; HD 4d10+8; hp 30; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 17, touch 11, flat-footed 16; Base Atk +4; Grap +6; Atk +8 melee (1d8+5/19-20, *+1 longsword*); AL LG; SV Fort +6, Ref +4, Will +1; Str 15, Dex 12, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 11, Cha 10.

Skills: Climb +8), Jump +6, Ride +7, Swim +6.

Feats: Cleave, Endurance, Lightning Reflexes, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (longsword), Weapon Specialization (longsword).

Language: Common.

Possessions: +1 longsword, dagger, breastplate, buckler, two *potions of cure light wounds, potion of sanctuary* (CL 3rd), two *potions of cure moderate wounds,* 7 gp in pouch.

Breathdrinker: CR 7; Medium Elemental (air, extraplanar); HD 8d8+24; hp 64; Init +6 (+2 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative); Spd fly 80 ft. (perfect); AC 16 (+2 Dex, +4 natural), touch 12, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +6; Grap +6; Atk +6 melee (2d4, wind scythe); SA fear gaze, steal breath; SQ air mastery, damage reduction 10/magic, elemental traits, invisibility; AL CE; SV Fort +5, Ref +8, Will +3; Str 11, Dex 15, Con 16, Int 14, Wis 13, Cha 14.

Skills: Hide +12, Move Silently +10, Search +12, Spot +9, Survival +9.

Feats: Ability Focus (fear gaze), Flyby Attack, Track.

Fear Gaze (Su): Anyone within 30 feet of a breathdrinker who meets the creature's gaze must make a Will save (DC 18) or be paralyzed with fear for 1d4 rounds.

Steal Breath (Su): As a full-round action, a breathdrinker can force a helpless, breathing creature to make a Fortitude save (DC 17) or take 1d6 points of Constitution damage. The breathdrinker heals 5 point of damage for each Constitution point lost by the victim.

Air Mastery (Ex): Any airborne creature takes a –1 penalty on attack and damage rolls against a breathdrinker.

Invisibility (Su): A breathdrinker can use *invisibility* on itself at will as a free action (caster level 8th).

Tactics: When the riot begins, make an Initiative check for the crowd by rolling 1d20; the result is when the crowd's actions take place in the round-by-round tactics listed below. The tactics listed here assume that the PCs do nothing to affect the outcome of the riot. Their actions can cause significant changes to the events listed here, in which case you can use these tactics as a guide to determine how things work out.

The rioting crowds make it extremely difficult to move around or cast spells. Movement in a crowd is halved (it costs 2 squares of movement to enter a square with a crowd). The crowd provides cover for anyone in it, enabling a Hide check and providing a bonus to Armor Class and on Reflex saves.

A character in the crowded region during the riot can take a full-round action to defend himself (and stand motionless) or move with the crowd (moving a distance equal to his normal speed in a random direction). If the character takes any other action, he must make a successful Reflex save (DC 15) to avoid suffering 1d8 points of nonlethal damage from various bruises and bumps. A character who tries to cast a spell in the crowd must make a successful Concentration check (DC 15) or lose the spell.

The rioters make attacks with improvised weapons (bricks, clubs, pieces of glass, rocks, etc.) each round against Sergeant Krewis and any other person they believe to be allying with the soldiers. A person surrounded by attacking rioters suffers 2d6 points of damage per round on the crowd's initiative; a successful Reflex save (DC 14) halves the damage done. A character who takes a full-round action to defend himself gains a +4 bonus to this Reflex save.

Characters can attempt to direct the rioters by making a DC 25 Diplomacy check or a DC 30 Intimidate check; the character making the check must be obvious to the rioters. Attempting to direct the rioters is a full-round action for Diplomacy, but a free action for Intimidate. Success indicates that a 20-foot square of rioters cease their destructive activity for a number of rounds equal to 1 + the character's Charisma modifier. Since there are nearly 30 groups of rioters this size, chances are that the PCs won't be able to calm the entire mob down before the security platoon arrives on round 9 of the riot, but they may be able to protect Sergeant Krewis with this tactic.

Round 0 (Surprise round): The riot begins on its initiative count; at this time, several members of the Last Laugh catch the half-orc guards flat-footed and kill them with a merciless barrage of sneak attacks.

Any PC who makes a successful Sense Motive check (DC 25) realizes that things are about to turn ugly and may take a standard action on his initiative check.

Round 1 (Riot begins): Sergeant Krewis tries to drink his *potion of sanctuary*; this provokes attacks of opportunity from the crowd. Since Krewis is surrounded, eight rioters attack him. Four of the attacks of opportunity attempt to sunder his potion before he can drink it.

Maavu casts *mage armor* on himself but takes no other action. Since he is still on the speaker's dais, the rioters gain no attack of opportunity on him, but he does not receive the benefit of cover from the crowd.

The rioters surge about haphazardly, damaging buildings and raising a din. The eight rioters surrounding Sergeant Krewis attack him. Archers in the windows of City Hall move into position. The Last Laugh provocateurs fade into the crowd (Hide check +8), their work done.

Inside city hall, the Cagewright begins casting *summon monster VIII* to summon a breathdrinker.

Round 2 (Riot escalates): Sergeant Krewis realizes that fighting back against the crowd could only further enrage them, so he spends his round defending himself from harm.

Maavu casts *expeditious retreat* on himself and retrieves his *potion of gaseous form* from his belt pouch.

The rioters continue to attack Sergeant Krewis. If he managed to drink his *potion of sanctuary*, he only suffers minimum damage each round from the rioters. The four archers in City Hall fire upon Maavu with their longbows (+3 ranged attack, 1d8/×3 damage). Remember that the archers have a –2 penalty to hit Maavu due to range.

The breathdrinker appears and the Cagewright casts *haste* and a quickened *protection from good* on it, and commands the elemental creature to kill Maavu. The Cagewright then retreats, adding no further chaos to the riot. The breathdrinker turns *invisible* as a free action and flies toward Maavu. Its *hasted* speed of 110 ft. allows it to reach Maavu this round by taking two move actions; there are too many buildings in the way for it to charge.

Round 3 (Breathdrinker attack): Sergeant Krewis continues to defend himself.

If Maavu goes before the breathdrinker, he tries to drink his *potion of gaseous form*; this provokes an attack of opportunity from the breathdrinker. If the breathdrinker goes first or its presence is revealed to Maavu, he instead tries to cast *glitterdust* over the entire area (with himself at the center) in a desperate attempt to make the breathdrinker visible.

The rioters continue attacking Sergeant Krewis. If the breathdrinker has already attacked, the archers spend the round unsure of what to do; otherwise they continue firing arrows at Maavu.

The breathdrinker becomes visible and uses its fear gaze on Maavu; if it paralyzes Maavu, it uses its steal breath ability on him. Otherwise, it attacks with its wind scythe twice (thanks to *haste*) and turns *invisible* at the end of the round. Once the breathdrinker becomes visible, the rioters in a 30-foot radius around speaker's dais flee in terror.

Round 4: Sergeant Krewis continues to defend himself.

If he remains unparalyzed, Maavu tries to escape the breathdrinker by fleeing. Unfortunately, the creature is fast enough that it should be able to keep up with him with ease.

The rioters continue attacking Sergeant Krewis. The archers resume their attacks on Maavu.

The breathdrinker continues to try to paralyze Maavu, attacking with its wind scythe each round Maavu remains mobile.

Rounds 5–8: Sergeant Krewis, the rioters, and the archers continue to perform their same actions from round four on the fifth and succeeding rounds as long as conditions don't change. Maavu puts all of his resources into an attempt to flee the area, and the breathdrinker continues its attack on Maavu until round 15, when it returns to the elemental plane of air in a blast of vapor.

Round 9: Cauldron's security platoon arrives on the scene. The platoon wastes no time in attempts to talk the crowd down and begins firing arrows into the mob, killing many people. The citizens, however, still outnumber the soldiers ten to one, and drive them off with an intense barrage of rocks, lit torches and coins. For the following hour chaos reigns supreme near the City Hall.

Development: If saved from certain death by the heroes, Krewis and Maavu become their friends (although with different perspectives), and grant them two interesting opportunities. Krewis thanks the PCs heartily and gives them one of his *potions of cure moderate wounds* (if one remains). In a future adventure, his intercession could allow the heroes to meet Terseon Skellerang without too many problems. A rescued Maavu, on the other hand, immediately invites the heroes to Redgorge to speak with the leaders of the Chisel (see "Maavu's Invitation"). In any case, Maavu does not remain in town long, and uses the chaos of the riots to sneak out and flee to Redgorge.

Ad Hoc XP: Award the heroes a CR 8 experience point award if they manage to help control the riot and save Krewis from the mob.

MAAVU'S INVITATION

If the heroes save Maavu from the breathdrinker, the merchant owes them his life, and he realizes it. As the riot distracts the guards and citizens, Maavu does his best to get the PCs' attention. He is wracked with guilt and worry about the riot, and thinks it was largely his fault that things got so out of hand. He pointedly asks the PCs if they believe that some evil is at work within the government and if they want to help to expose and defeat this hidden evil.

Maavu wants to leave town before some other enemy or law enforcer takes notice of him. Before he does, though, he invites the PCs to a meeting in Redgorge. He tells them that he has certain allies who may wish to speak with them, and that Alek Tercival should be there to answer questions as well. If the PCs agree to the visit, Maavu informs them that they must go to the Redhead Miner's Inn in Redgorge and answer "mortar" to the

appropriate question. Maavu imbibes his second *potion of gaseous form* to escape the city.

If the PCs don't trust Maavu and threaten to arrest him, Maavu does his best to escape and contact the characters at some later date to renew his offer.

Not long after the riot begins, the entire town guard breaks up the primary mob and restores order around City Hall by arresting and beating many citizens. Isolated pockets of rioters and looters continue to plague the city until the lord mayor himself appears on the City Hall's balcony late in the afternoon, where he promises that taxes will not be levied for three full months. Criers move quickly through the streets to spread the word, and by evening the chaos has ended. Patrols of the town watch (sans half-orcs) again patrol the streets, but tensions remain high.

A FIRE IN THE NIGHT (EL 9)

Later than night, agents of the Last Laugh call a pair of large fire elementals. The Last Laugh sends the elementals to ravage Minuta's Board, a cheap inn that boards any half-orc mercenaries who couldn't find space in the Town Guard Barracks. The Last Laugh hopes that this elemental attack casts further shadow on the Chisel's name.

A few hours after sunset, the City Hall bell begins to ring, warning the population of the fire. The orange glow of the flames make it easy to spot the burning building. If the heroes intervene, they find that the inn's occupants have evacuated the building and started a bucket brigade to douse the flames, which already wreath the entire building. Several burly half-orcs begin chopping down the outlying wooden structures near the inn with their double axes in an attempt to prevent the fire from spreading to nearby houses.

As the PCs approach Minuta's Board, in the red light of the fire, they overhear whispers and screams against the half-orcs ("Go back to the hell you come from, mongrels!", "Have a taste of fire, spawn of the Unwinking Eye!", "Let's burn away the rot from your human half, freaks!"). These voices, of course, come from racist and irresponsible Cauldronites who simply despise the latest tenants at Minuta's Board. Other citizens, however, have rushed to help the half-orcs fight the fire.

In front of the flaming inn, its innkeeper Pilok Minuta (male human Com3) and a mercenary sergeant Rokewko (male half-orc Ftr4) argue. The innkeeper pulls at his hair, crying and yelling to the big half-orc. "Your thugs are demolishing my inn! Stop them!" Rokewko ignores the innkeeper, and turns away to tell his axemen in Orc to continue. Pilok grabs at Rokewko's arm in an attempt to get the sergeant's attention. Bewildered, sweaty, and visibly scorched by fire, Rokewko loses his temper and throws the innkeeper to the ground. The half-orc grabs Pilok's neck with a single hand, puts his foaming mouth at just one inch from the man's face, and yells, "You tiny idiot! You don't get it! Flame-demons inside kill us! Fire unstoppable! Blades useless!" As Pilok

whines incoherently, the half-orc puts his scimitar before the innkeeper's face, showing its twisted and melted blade.

Characters who make a successful Listen check (DC 20) hear faint cries for help coming from somewhere inside the burning building.

Creatures: As the PCs take in the scene, a gout of fire suddenly explodes through the doorway of the inn, enveloping and incinerating a screaming half-orc axeman. The two Huge fire elementals have burst out of the inn and into the street to seek further things to burn.

While the Last Laugh developed the plan of setting fire to Minuta's Board, these two fire elementals here were conjured by the same villain who summoned the breathdrinker in the City Hall. Unlike the breathdrinker, which was summoned, both fire elementals have been called from the Plane of Fire, and until they are dealt with they continue to burn buildings and people.

Huge Fire Elementals (2): hp 136 each, *Monster Manual* 99.

Development: One of Pilok's scullery-boys (Com1, perhaps a party's acquaintance from the Lantern Street Orphanage) stumbled down the stairs during the evacuation of the upper floor and is stuck under a fallen timber. Inside the first floor of Minuta's Board, characters are exposed to extreme heat and smoke (see *DMG* 303–304). There is a 10% chance each round that flaming debris falls upon a character inside the burning building (1d6 concussion and 1d6 fire damage, Ref save negates). Freeing the scullery-boy requires a Strength check (DC 21, up to two other characters can assist).

Ten rounds after the fire elementals burst from the building, a half-orc cleric of Kord, Asfelkir Hranleurth, arrives on the scene and uses a *wand of control water* to help put out the fire and fight the elementals. If the PCs saved the scullery-boy, Asfelkir gladly takes him under his custody. The local cleric of Pelor, Kristof Jurgensen, also comes to help the wounded and those intoxicated by the smoke. When all is finished, and silence falls again on the streets, Kristof screams out at Cauldron: "Fools! The flames of discord will raise hell in our town!"

Ad Hoc XP: If the PCs save the scullery-boy, award them experience points for a CR 4 encounter.

ORDER RESTORED

The next morning, several town criers announce that order has been restored in Cauldron. The lord mayor pardons all citizens involved in the riot, and most of those who were arrested are freed before sunset. There is no pardon, however, for the "evil merchant" Maavu. His properties have been confiscated and he is sentenced to death in absentia. Town criers publicize Alek Tercival's letter of challenge, but also cite reliable sources that the paladin of St. Cuthbert has been possessed by demons. Thus, the lord mayor declares the challenge null and void. The government offers a reward of 5,000 gp to whomever finds and saves the possessed paladin. The crier also announces that after the destruction of Minuta's Board, all half-orc mercenaries in the Lord Mayor's service are to be transferred to an encampment outside the city walls.

CHAPTER TWO: THE CHISEL AND THE STAFF

Recent events probably leave the PCs puzzled about two NPCs: Maavu Arlintal and Alek Tercival. Maavu can be found at the Redhead Miner's Inn in Redgorge. On the other hand, finding Alek's Tercival is a bit more complicated; no one seems to have seen him recently.

JENYA AND ALEK

Alek Tercival and Jenya Urikas have been friends since childhood, although they drifted apart for a time during the paladin's "dissolute" years. The characters likely already know that Jenya has ties to Alek. Any other citizens they ask about Alek invariably refer them to Jenya; their friendship is fairly common knowledge.

If asked about him, Jenya admits that she's very worried about Alek. She supports Alek's supposed challenge to Skellerang, but greatly fears the rumor about him being victim of demonic possession. She adds that although Alek has not been back to the church for two months, he has been seen in several areas to the west, including Redgorge. Jenya tells the heroes about Alek's background and his conversion to St. Cuthbert (see "Background") and pleads them to help him.

Jenya Urikas gives the PCs one other important piece of information about Alek. He often sold art objects he found in his adventures to Tygot Mispas, the proprietor of an antiquity shop over on Lava Avenue. He sold these objects to accumulate the necessary money to buy back his ancestral manor, which his father sold to pay off some debts. An investigation of his latest sales to Tygot might provide some clues as to where he's been spending his time over the last few months. At the very least, Tygot himself might have some information on Alek.

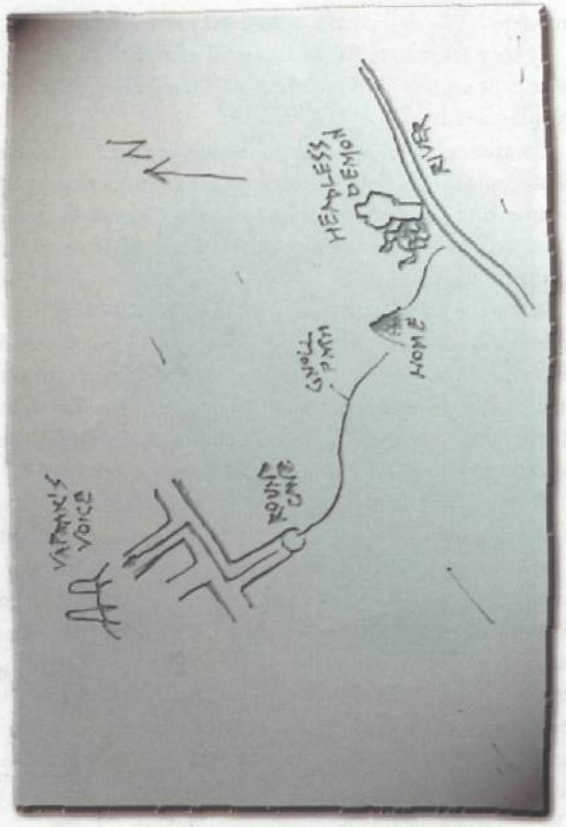
Jenya has already used the *Star of Justice* (a magic axe with prophetic powers, see "Life's Bazaar") to cast *divination* about Alek's current activities. The results were as follows: "Late on the path of justice, trapped between glass and stone, he weeps where many can see him, but he can see only himself."

TYGOT'S OLD THINGS

Tygot Mispas, a 120-year-old halfling retired from adventuring for two decades, owns a small but well-stocked antiquity shop on Lava Avenue. "Tygot's Old Things" specializes in nonmagical art objects gathered from across the known world. Tygot himself has excellent commercial contacts in the capital city of Sasserine, and frequently buys old documents and art objects from local adventurers. Tygot's best customers include the lord mayor himself and many nobles in Cauldron (including Lord Orbius Vhalantru).

His shop is a two-story structure with a small flat on the upper floor and a well-organized business area on the lower. Tygot's shares the place with Lepook, an elderly and lazy blink dog that agreed to spend his old age with his "civilized" friend. Lepook keeps watch on the shop and on Tygot as well, acting as his "conscience" when the halfling's greed rears up. The main shop itself

Player Handout #1



contains an impressive assortment of less valuable antiquities, mostly vases, statuettes, small furniture, and tapestries. Tygot keeps his most precious wares in the basement, where no fewer than thirty art objects, worth an average of 300 gp each, can be found. The door that leads down to the basement is made of steel and is locked with two masterwork locks (Open Lock DC 30) requiring different keys. Apart from the occasional trip to the Coy Nixie for a frugal meal, Tygot spends his free time writing his memoir and casting diminutive plaster replicas of Cauldron's monuments (the City Hall, the Cathedral of Wee Jas, the Lakeside Pavilion, etc.). He sells these replicas in his shop for 1 gp each.

When the PCs arrive, Tygot recognizes them as the heroes who saved his shop from the floods and greets them warmly. Lepook *dimension doors* over to the most charismatic PC and sniffs his hands. Tygot respects the PCs enough to skip his usual attempt to palm off the first piece of junk at hand, and invites them inside for a cup of tea and a private chat. His office is neatly fitted out with fine, human-sized mahogany furnishings.

Tygot is content with idle chit-chat, but if the PCs ask him about Alek Tercival, Tygot becomes more animated. He says that the paladin is an interesting supplier of his shop, and a good friend to boot. As far as he knows, the paladin tithes one tenth of his treasure to the church of St. Cuthbert and puts the rest aside for some purpose. Whenever he found art objects on his journeys, he invariably came here to sell them for cash. Tygot keeps a meticulous register of his acquisitions, and can easily track down all of the objects that Alek brought in over the last month. He knows Alek found them in the Cauldron region, but Tygot has no idea where any of them originally came from.

The items are listed below:

- **The Volcanic Gosling**: A life-size statuette of a small goose carved in deep gray, polished basalt (8 lbs. weight, 250 gp value). One of twelve created by the heroine Tlimida about eight centuries before, on Midsummer's Day. According to legend, Tlimida also set the foundation stone of Caludron's City Hall. Tlimida, a descendant of the legendary Surabar Spellmason, was deeply moved by the sudden flight of a flock

CAMPAIGN SEED: ALEK'S TREASURE

In the past, Alek Tercival adventured with several diverse groups, earning friends and enemies in the Cauldron region and beyond. His main objective has always been to earn enough money to regain a high social status in his town and to buy back his family estate. For this reason, he has stored a considerable amount of treasure in a cache known only to him. If Alek dies, this cache could become the object of a treasure hunt. The location of his estate, and the nature of its current owners and inhabitants, are left intentionally vague.

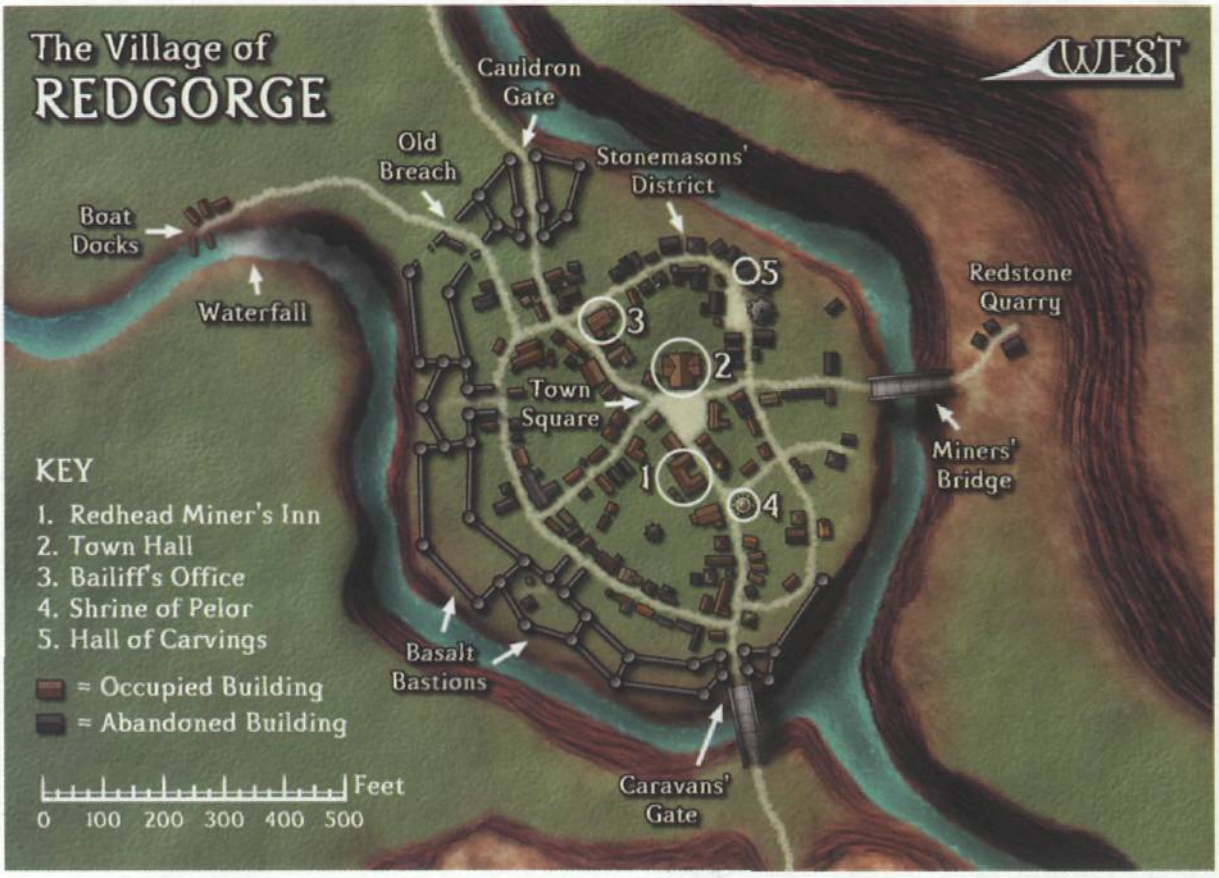
of ducks over the lake, and chose to immortalize its protagonists with these carvings.

- **The Knight in Brown**: A 250-year-old painting of a standing knight in brown robes (20 in. × 35 in., oil on wood, 150 gp value). The knight carries a bastard sword at his side and leans on a decorative sill. On the sill sits a horned helmet. Thought to be the portrait of Axel Herewall, bailiff of the distant town of Basan. The portrait is signed A. A. on the lower right corner.
- **The Baboon Mask**: A gold-plated, darkwood mask of an unknown baboonlike divinity (human size, 350 gp) once worshiped in the jungles west of Cauldron. The last reported sighting of a werebaboon (before the recent encounter with Tongueater in "Flood Season") dates back more than a century.
- **The God of the Lake**: A bust of a fish-like monster's head (a kopru), finely carved in pink marble (20 lbs., 300 gp value). The neck bears signs of damage, and was probably severed from a life-size statue of a kopru divinity. Its eye sockets are hollow, for the statue's gemstone eyes were stolen long ago. The head dates back to a time well before the first settlers reached Cauldron, the histories of which never mention the presence of kopru in the area.
- **The Hegemonic Plate**: A rectangular plate of silver etched with odd figures and ciphers (6 in. × 8 in., 400 gp value, see **Player Handout #1**). A crude map and a few notes in Giant are scratched into the opposite side of the plate, which would be smooth otherwise. These scratched notes seem to be quite recent, but the plate itself has a definite aura of ancient weight about it.

While the other objects are unimportant to this adventure (but could provide foreshadowing for future adventures), the hegemonic plate (which Alek found in an old ogre's cave), summa-

CAMPAIGN SEED: THE HAUNTED VILLAGE

The Haunted Village is a ruined settlement set in the craggy foothills south of Cauldron. It was founded by Kozomagon Lidu, one of Surabar's greatest friends and competitors. Originally named Liduton, the Haunted Village thrived for only a very short time before most of its inhabitants perished during the Battle of Redgorge. Kozomagon was a necromancer, and she founded Liduton near an ancient underground necropolis. Just as Surabar used his great elemental powers to defend his people, Kozomagon drew upon her powers to raise an army to protect Liduton. This foolish attempt to raise an army of undead to support the defenders of Redgorge ended in tragedy as the undead army turned on the citizens. Little is known today of the long-term results of this event, but rumors about powerful undead creatures in the Haunted Village continue to persist.



rizes the terrible experiment of the spell weavers before the disaster that produced the Demonskar. A successful Decipher Script check (DC 30), *comprehend languages*, *legend lore*, or *vision* spell allows a PC to decipher the runes and reveals the plate is from an ancient society of powerful spell-casting creatures. A successful Knowledge (nature) check (DC 30) identifies the six-armed figures as spell weavers and the humanoid figures as ogres.

The spell weavers' leader is depicted on the right side of the plate; he holds something referred to as the "*Starry Mirror*" above his head. A string of ciphers under the depiction of the Starry Mirror represent numbers. These numbers are, in order, 3, 4, 5, 1, 2, and 3. These six numbers are the numeric combination that provide the key for properly using the *mirror jump* property of the *Starry Mirror* (see area **V15** at Vaprak's Voice), although this is not indicated anywhere on the plate and is not revealed by spells such as *legend lore* or *vision*.

On the left side of the plate, three scenes are depicted. These three scenes should be read from bottom to top. The bottom scene depicts the ogre slaves of the spell weavers toiling to build the planar travel installation. The next scene up depicts the same ogres, empowered by the *Amaranth Elixir* and granted great strength to aid in their work. The plate does not indicate the *elixir's* less desirable quality of eroding the will and sense of self. The topmost scene shows the planar travel installation in its completed glory.

The map on the opposite side was carved by the old ogre himself not long after he discovered Vaprak's Voice in his wanderings, and shows the way from his lair to the spell weaver ruins. The ogre was slain by Alek before he could explore the site further. A successful Knowledge (local) check (DC 25) allows a character to note that a statue of a headless demon is said to stand on the banks of the Red River to the southwest of Cauldron.

If the PCs want to purchase one of these objects, Tygot asks for double the listed value at first. When he does so, Lepook howls loudly, and continues to do so as long as the price remains over the listed value. Tygot looks embarrassed, smiles a lot, and quickly lowers his asking price to that listed above.

TO REDGORGE

If Maavu extended an invitation to the heroes to visit him and his allies, the PCs should eventually take up his invitation and travel to Redgorge. This village was the first human settlement in the area. Founded about 800 years ago, Redgorge was at one time a much larger settlement. It never fully recovered from Nabthatoron's assault long ago. Redgorge sits in a narrow strip of flat ground between a cliff and an immense quarry of red pebble gravel. West of the village, a prodigious line of fortifications known as the Basalt Bastions protect the land, their massive walls unguarded and draped with vines. These fortifications, as impressive as Cauldron's outer walls, tower over the village itself. They were built ages ago by Surabar Spellmason's

powerful spells in a single week, to aid in the defense of Redgorge against the denizens of the Demonskar.

Today, Redgorge is a farming and mining village. The old Stonemason District, where Surabar Spellmason once dwelt, is visibly depopulated and most of its buildings lie empty and in ruin. Over the decades, most of Redgorge's masons left to work in Cauldron. The early colonists founded a second city nearby as well. This was the village of Liduton. After the Battle of Redgorge, casualties among the colonists there were so high that Liduton was completely abandoned. Today, its ruins are known simply as the "Haunted Village."

Redgorge (village): Conventional; AL CG; population 600 adults, 200 gp limit; Assets 6,000 gp; Mixed (79% human, 9% dwarf, 5% gnome, 3% halfling, 2% elf, 1% half-elf, 1% half-orc).

Authority Figures: Mayor Sind Nebern, female human Exp7; Pragat Millak, male human Ftr6 (bailiff).

Important Characters: Oliron Masht, male human Ftr3/Wiz7/Hgh4 (adventurer and architect, a.k.a. the Foreman, high handcrafter of the Chisel); Ekaym Smallcask, male human Ftr3/Brd4/Hgh3 (adventurer and linguist, a.k.a. Honest Minstrel, high handcrafter of the Chisel), Maavu, male human Exp5/Wiz4/Hgh1 (outlawed merchant, a.k.a. Camel Driver, high handcrafter of the Chisel), Mikimax, male human Com5/Exp2/Hgh1 (innkeeper, a.k.a. Bird Seed, high handcrafter of the Chisel). *Note*: the "Hgh" abbreviation indicates levels in the High Handcrafter prestige class, which is detailed in the Appendix.

In Redgorge, the heroes can easily find shelter in any abandoned house if they're short on cash. Otherwise, they'll be able to afford to rent a room at the Redhead Miner's. This two-story inn, which can accommodate up to 30 guests, contains a large shop that caters specifically to adventurers and explorers. The inn has a large common room on the first floor, where villagers often come to have a drink before sunset. The innkeeper, Mikimax, is a big, smiling man who keeps his long red hair tied in a ponytail. He's also a member of the Chisel. Every evening when drinks are served, he puts dozens of delicious, free snacks on the bar and provocatively invites his tipsy customers to help themselves: "Come on over, beggars! You won't starve as long as Mikimax lives!"

When the heroes arrive, a handsome man in his mid-thirties quietly plucks the strings of a lute in a corner of the common room, heedless of Mikimax's call. This man, dark-haired and rather short, wears a fine blue robe and polished knee-high boots. When he sees the heroes before the bar he calls out a riddle to them: "What can bind with water, sand, and lime?" The heroes should know the answer to this riddle ("mortar") from Maavu.

The musician is Ekaym Smallcask (human male Ftr3/Brd4/Hgh3, Decipher Script +14). Also known as Honest Minstrel, Ekaym is a high-ranking member of the Chisel. Honest Minstrel is an adventurer based in Redgorge and a close friend of the Foreman, the mysterious leader of the organization. Ekaym is an exceptionally skilled linguist, and is often called by the rulers of nearby kingdoms to work as an interpreter. If the PCs were not able to decipher the spell weaver writings on the hegemonic plate, Ekaym could help them out.

The Chisel knows the heroes from their growing fame, and the Foreman asked him to invite them to a private meeting. Honest Minstrel sings the riddle to test their wits, unaware that Maavu may have told them the answer already. In any case, after some small talk he invites the party to follow him to a private room in the basement of the Redhead Miner's, where a meeting of his "colleagues" is scheduled to take place soon. He simply says that the Foreman wants to talk with them. Maavu (if still alive) and Alek Tercival are also invited; Honest Minstrel tells the PCs this as well in an attempt to further intrigue them into attending the meeting.

TALKING WITH THE CHISEL

The leaders of the Chisel meet the heroes in a private room under the Redhead Miner's Inn. The room is silent and comfortable, with a great oak table in the middle. On the chamber's walls, beautiful frescoes depict the glorious moments of Surabar Spellmason's life:

- Surabar's arrival near at the foot of a dormant volcano, recognizable as Cauldron.
- An encounter between Surabar and a sword-wielding angel, in which the angel gives Surabar a glowing quarterstaff. A member of the Chisel, or a successful Knowledge (history) check (DC 25), can identify the angel as Nidrama, a movanic deva said to watch over the region. The same source identifies the glowing quarterstaff as *Alakast*, a magic weapon said to be particularly potent against evil outsiders.
- The foundation of Redgorge.
- Surabar's magical construction of the Basalt Bastions.
- The battle of Redgorge against the demonic denizens of the Demonskar; Surabar leads Redgorge's forces and a towering hyena-headed glabrezu leads the Demonskar forces.
- The transformation of Surabar into a mountain, symbolizing his death.

When the PCs arrive in the room, Oliron Masht, Foreman of the Chisel, is already sitting at the table's head. He is a tall human dressed in brown, with gray hair and a short, well-trimmed goatee. He greets the PCs and offers them a drink from a cask of vintage wine. Oliron is a powerful and fearless individual who has tempered the tradition of his organization with years of adventuring. Originally from Sasserine, where he works as one of the king's architects, his return to Redgorge a few months ago was prompted by rumors of evil afoot in the region. At first, he asks a few questions about the heroes' interests and goals, but doesn't say much about the Chisel or the matter at hand. If the PCs press for more details he asks them to wait for the other invitees to arrive.

Mikimax and Maavu (if he still lives) arrive after a few minutes, but Alek Tercival does not. Alek's absence worries the Foreman, but he admits that he did not expect the paladin to show up and starts the meeting without him.

During the meeting, the Foreman tries to persuade the heroes to cooperate with him. He and his colleagues discuss the following points. If Maavu is dead, substitute him with Mikimax (who helped him) when he is mentioned.

- The Foreman begins by raising a point of contention with the organization's current situation. The selfish interests of many of its members have violated the philosophy of the Chisel, which is to protect of the region and support artisans and craftsmen. Most of the violators are Cauldronites who have shifted toward neutrality and no longer care about the wellness of society as a whole.
- The Foreman reveals his fears that some great force of chaos and evil is at work in Cauldron's government, and the lord mayor may be under its influence. All sources of divination magic indicate some great disaster on the horizon. The Chisel's greatest prophet, an earth weird, has not answered the Forman's calls, so details on this disaster remain vague.
- The Foreman mentions Maavu at this point and notes that although his actions were well-intended, they nonetheless caused more harm than good. He now fears that the Chisel is becoming a scapegoat for the current troubles, and that forces from Cauldron may soon take drastic measures against the organization. Maavu justifies himself by claiming he meant to organize a peaceful demonstration, but that "some villain stirred up the riot to discredit any opposition." Honest Minstrel rightly suspects the Last Laugh, and takes Maavu for a ride: "They suckered you, nothing else!" At this point, a squabble breaks out between Maavu and Honest Minstrel (Maavu: "Better dead than slaves! A wandering strummer like you should know!" Honest Minstrel: "Peddler! You count lives like money! No difference to you, eh?"). The Foreman grows tired of the argument and demands silence.
- At this point, Honest Minstrel notes that his informants in Cauldron warned him that Terseon Skellerang plans to invade and search Redgorge, using the half-orc mercenaries now encamped outside the city walls. The members agree that the Hall of Carvings would survive such an invasion intact, but that such an event would be disastrous nonetheless. The villagers would oppose such actions and would fight against the invaders. The Foreman muses that Skellerang must be persuaded to renounce to his plan. Alek Tercival's public renouncement of his challenge should do just the thing, but unfortunately, no one knows where he is.
- Alek's absence worries the Foreman above everything else, and at this point he turns to the heroes. If they have already started to search for the missing paladin, the Foreman commends them for their insight. If they have not started yet, he asks them to do so while the Chisel keeps several eyes on Skellerang's actions. He has no reward to offer but the Chisel's friendship. The Foreman concludes the meeting by leading the PCs and the others on a short night walk along the Basalt Bastions. He looks intently toward the west at one point...toward the Demonskar. He sighs, then says philosophically, "Surabar's spells raised this wall in seven days, but his guidance has failed to build a righteous society in as many centuries."

If the characters seem to be at a loss as to where to begin their search for Alek, the Foreman recommends they speak to Jenya Urikas at the Church of St. Cuthbert; the two of them have long been friends. He also informs the PCs that Alek had been spending a fair amount of time recently exploring the jungles near Redgorge, and he often used a rowboat to enter the jungle via the Red River. If he is told about the map scratched into the hegemonic plate from Tygot's shop, he can tell the PCs that a beheaded statue of a demon does indeed stand on the jungle banks of the Red River to the southwest.

JOURNEY TO THE DEMONSKAR

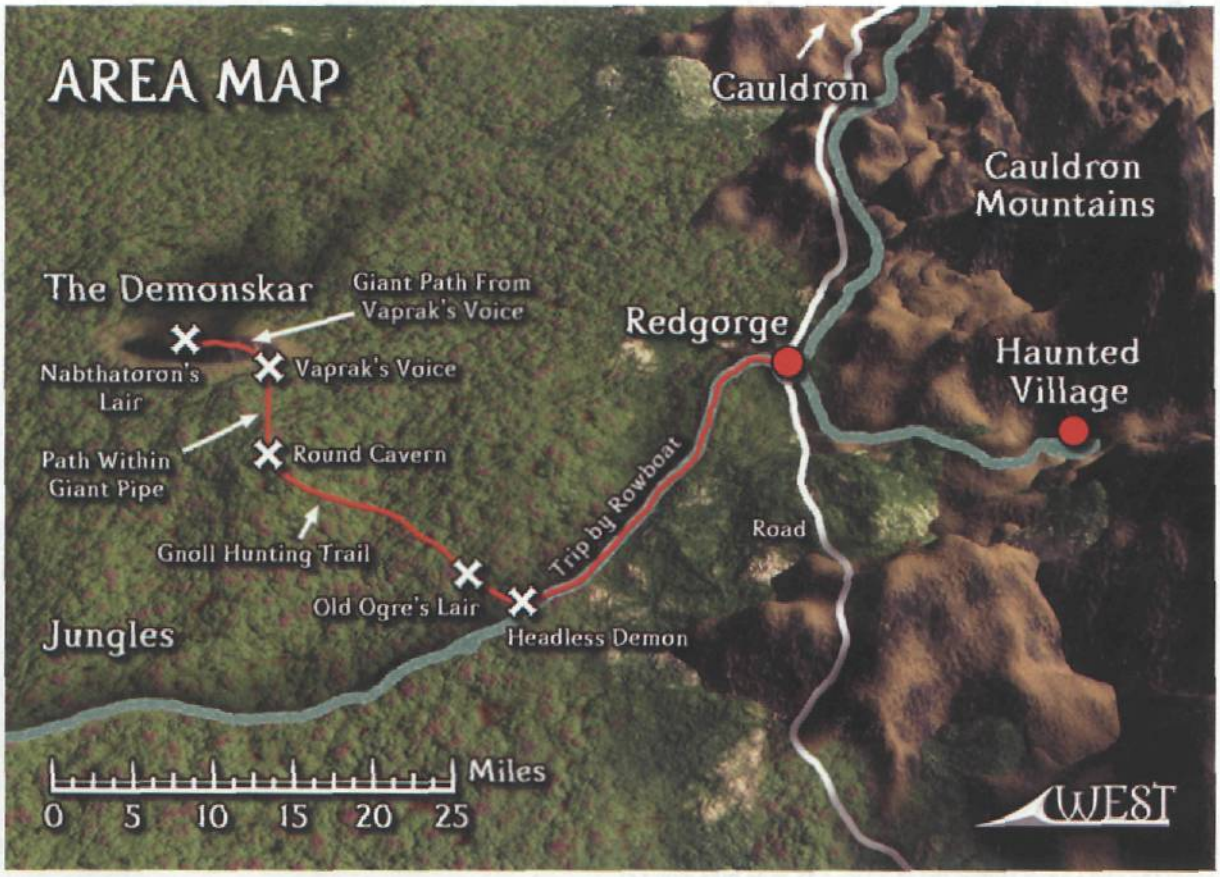
After speaking with Jenya, Tygot, and the Chisel, the PCs should be ready to head into the jungle via the Red River to try to track Alek down. The Area Map details the jungle region near Redgorge, and indicates all of the locations carved on the rear of the hegemonic plate. The jungles near Redgorge are fairly wild, with a few winding hunter's trails within. The most efficient way to penetrate the jungle is to take the Red River. Mikimax gladly supplies the PCs with plenty of food and all the mundane gear they may request, including a small but stable rowboat. The rowboat trip to the Headless Demon takes about four hours, during which the heroes should be impressed with the overwhelming presence of life around them.

THE HEADLESS DEMON (EL 9)

A large beach runs along the northern bank of the Red River here. A badly weathered stone statue of some sort of humanoid creature stands at the edge of the jungle, overlooking the beach. The statue's neck ends in a stump, and its expressive canine head lies in the sand a few feet away. Patches of mold and moss grow on the statue, but the vegetation around it seems to have been cleared away recently. A narrow trail winds off to the northwest and into the jungle just beyond the statue.

The mold-encrusted idol is little more than a carved pillar. If a character examines the sculpture closely and makes a Knowledge (the planes) check (DC 15), he notices that the statue itself depicts a glabrezu. The statue itself was built ages ago by gnolls in an attempt to curry the favor of Nabthatoron. The glabrezu has little interest in the gnolls or this statue, but that hasn't kept the gnoll natives from viewing it as a sacred relic. Various local gnoll tribes often engage in short, brutal wars in order to lay claim to this land; it was during one of these battles nearly two centuries ago that the statue's head was knocked off.

Creatures: A band of gnoll rangers lies in wait in the jungles surrounding this beach. Their tribe recently gained control of this area, and these gnolls plan to ambush the next tribe of gnolls to arrive here. Unfortunately for the PCs, the gnolls take just as much offense at their arrival in the area.



Gnoll Hunters, Male Gnoll Rgr3 (6): CR 4; Medium humanoid (gnoll); HD 5d8+15; hp 37 each; Init +3; Spd 30 ft.; AC 18, touch 13, flat-footed 15; Base Atk +4; Grp +7; Atk/Full Atk +8 ranged (1d8+3 plus black adder venom/×3, masterwork longbow) or +8 melee (1d8+4, masterwork battleaxe); SA archery combat style, favored enemy (animal +2); SQ darkvision 60 ft., wild empathy; AL NE; SV Fort +9, Ref +6, Will +2; Str 17, Dex 16, Con 16, Int 8, Wis 12, Cha 6.

Skills: Hide +9, Listen +6, Move Silently +6, Spot +7, Swim +6.

Feats: Endurance[B], Point Blank Shot, Rapid Shot[B], Skill Focus (Hide), Track[B].

Possessions: Masterwork longbow (+3 Str bonus), 5 arrows poisoned with black adder venom, 15 arrows, masterwork spear, masterwork studded leather armor, 3 doses black adder venom.

Tactics: The gnolls remain hidden in the foliage on the north bank of the river and shoot the PCs with arrows as soon as they come within 300 feet of the beach. On the wooded banks of the river, the gnolls have cover and concealment. They engage in melee only as a last resort.

THE OLD OGRE'S HOME (EL 11)

The path into the jungle from the headless demon leads to the old ogre's home; a shallow cave in the side of a low hill. Here, Alek Tercival recently killed a venerable but vicious ogre. A horrible odor of decay emanates from the interior of the cave. Inside, the PCs find the ogre's skeleton along with the carcasses of a pair of devoured baboons. A **Creature** has also moved into the recently abandoned cavern.

Creature: A forest sloth now lives in this cave. It is quite protective of its new lair and fights to the death as long as intruders stay inside the cave or attack it from outside. If the party includes any Small characters, the sloth attacks them before the others, trying to swallow a Small character whole.

CAMPAIGN SEED: THE GNOLL TRIBES

Several tribes of gnolls have recently appeared in the jungles near the Demonskar. Most were attracted to the region by legends spread by a wandering gnoll adept known as Triple Tail. According to this legend, the son of Yeenoghu emerged from the Abyss in a great fire from the Demonskar, an event that marked the start of a thirteen-century war that would eventually make the gnolls the dominant race in the world. These gnolls are loosely organized brigands, but a few of them are religious fanatics inspired by Triple Tail. These gnolls, adepts and rangers of considerable ability worship Nabthatoron as the son of Yeenoghu. Although the glabrezu cares little for such worshippers, he nevertheless accepts human sacrifices from them.

Forest Sloth: CR 11; Large animal; HD 14d8+70; hp 147; Init +5; Spd 40 ft., brachiation 40 ft., climb 60 ft.; AC 21, touch 14, flat-footed 16; Base Atk +8; Grap +19; Atk +15 melee (2d4+7, claw); Full Atk +15 melee (2d4+7, 2 claws) plus +10 melee (2d8+3, bite); Space/Reach 10 ft./10 ft.; SA improved grab, swallow whole; SQ darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision, poison immunity, scent; AL N; SV Fort +12, Ref +12, Will +4; Str 25, Dex 20, Con 21, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 9.

Skills: Climb +15, Listen +9, Move Silently +10, Spot +9.

Feats: Alertness, Improved Bull Rush, Improved Overrun, Power Attack, Track.

Improved Grab (Ex): A forest sloth that hits a Medium or smaller opponent with both claws can start a grapple as a free action. If the sloth gets a hold, it automatically hits with its bite attack and can try to swallow the opponent in the next round.

Swallow Whole (Ex): A forest sloth can swallow an opponent up to Small size. A victim in the sloth's gullet takes 2d4+7 points of bludgeoning damage plus 1d8 points of acid damage each round. The AC of the sloth's gullet is 13; dealing 25 points of damage to it allows a swallowed creature to escape.

Treasure: A successful Search check (DC 25) made in the old ogre's cave uncovers what was once Alek Tercival's *wand of cure moderate wounds*. The wand is out of charges now, but the symbol of St. Cuthbert is still quite visible on its butt. Discovery of this clue should encourage the PCs that they're on the right track.

THE HUNTING TRAIL

From the Old Ogre's Home, the PCs face a 15-mile hike along a gnoll hunting trail in order reach the entrance to the Round Cavern. Although most animals have learned to avoid this hunting trail and the gnolls that use it, the trail is far from safe to travel. Gnoll hunters can be found often on the trail as they seek out food for their tribes. Worse, larger creatures have learned that the trail serves as a great place to hunt gnolls. The jungle track reduces overland movement to 3/4 its normal speed, and *there's an 8% chance each hour that those traveling on the trail* have one of the following encounters. Several of these encounters utilize creatures that appear in the *Monster Manual II*, the *Book of Vile Darkness*, or previous issues of DUNGEON *Magazine*; if you don't have access to these statistics simply roll 1d4 to determine the type of creature encountered rather than 1d8.

d8 roll	Encounter
1	EL 7: A band of 6 gnolls (*Monster Manual* 130) led by two gnoll rangers (Rgr3, use stats from "The Headless Demon" above) returning from an unsuccessful hunt; if the gnolls hear the PCs approach they attempt an ambush.
2	EL 8: A herd of 4 dire boars (*Monster Manual* 63) lunge out of the jungle to attack the characters.
3	EL 8: A dire tiger (*Monster Manual* 65) stalks the party and attacks anyone who gets separated from the group.
4	EL 8: A pair of megaraptors (*Monster Manual* 60) sunning themselves in a small clearing take offense at the PCs' intrusion into their territory.
5	EL 8: Three gambols (*Monster Manual II* 108) drop down from the trees above to surround and attack the last character in line.
6	EL 8: A band of three bar-lgura demons (*Book of Vile Darkness* 170) try to capture the PCs and return to the Demonskar with them.
7	EL 8: The PCs come across a troop of 6 hill baboons led by two werebaboon barbarians (Bbn3) feeding on the bodies of a band of gnoll hunters. Statistics for hill baboons (regular baboons advanced to 3 hit dice) and werebaboon barbarians can be found on page 36 of DUNGEON #97.
8	EL 9: An allosaurus and an ankylosaurus (*Monster Manual II* 70), locked in mortal combat (each is at 75% of their normal hit points), blocks the trail.

WINGS OF JUSTICE (EL 9)

At some point after the PCs leave the Old Ogre's Cave but before they reach the entrance to the Round Cave (most likely after they have settled down for the evening to rest but before they fall asleep), they have a brush with history. A PC that makes a Listen check (DC 14) hears a sudden flutter of large wings, and all wildlife falls suddenly silent. One round later, a beautiful woman emerges from the dense foliage and stands at the edge of the PCs' encampment. She has perfectly white skin and stern, sparkling eyes of silver. A pair of feathered wings spread out behind the woman's back and she raises a flaming sword, which emits a myriad of flickering beams of light.

Creatures (EL 10): This angelic creature is a movanic deva named Nidrama. She is the same angel encountered by Surabar Spellmason centuries before (as shown in the frescoes in Redhead Miner's Inn) and has long been a guardian against evil in the region. She has taken note of the PCs' actions and accomplishments, and has decided to make herself known to them just as she did for Surabar so many years ago.

Nidrama, Movanic Deva: CR 10; Medium outsider (extraplanar, good); HD 6d8+18; hp 45; Init +7; Spd 40 ft., fly 90 ft. (good); AC 21, touch 13, flat-footed 18; Base Atk +6; Grap +11; Atk +13 melee (2d6+8 plus 1d6 fire/19-20, *+1 flaming greatsword*); Full Atk +13/+8 melee (2d6+8 plus 1d6 fire/19-20, *+1 flaming greatsword*); SA spell-like abilities; SQ angel traits, damage reduction 10/evil, darkvision 60 ft., divine equilibrium, fire resistance 20, heavenly deflection, immune to acid, immune to cold, immune to electricity, protective aura, soothing presence of nature, spell resistance 19; AL NG; SV Fort +8, Ref +8, Will +11; Str 20, Dex 16, Con 17, Int 17, Wis 19, Cha 23.

Skills: Balance +12, Concentration +12, Diplomacy +17, Intimidate +13, Knowledge (history) +13, Knowledge (religion) +13, Knowledge (the planes) +13, Listen +13, Sense Motive +13, Spellcraft +12, Spot +13.

Feats: Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Weapon Focus (greatsword).

Languages: Celestial, Common, Draconic, Infernal.

Spell-like Abilities: At will—*aid, consecrate, continual flame, create food and water, death ward, detect evil, discern lies* (DC 20), *poly-*

morph, prayer, protection from arrows; 3/day—*atonement, bless weapon, cure serious wounds, daylight, divination, ethereal jaunt, hallow, holy smite* (DC 20), *neutralize poison, plane shift* (DC 21), *remove curse, remove disease, remove fear*; 1/day—*commune, raise dead*. Effective caster level 9th. The save DCs are Charisma-based.

Divine Equilibrium (Ex): Nidrama is immune to the effect of negative or positive planar energy traits.

Heavenly Deflection (Su): Once per round, Nidrama can deflect ranged attacks, rays, or single-target spells with her +1 *flaming greatsword*. To do this, she must succeed in a Reflex save (DC 20 plus enhancement bonus of the attack or spell level).

Protective Aura (Su): As a free action, Nidrama can surround herself with a nimbus of light that has a radius of 20 feet and acts as a double-strength *magic circle against evil* and as a *minor globe of invulnerability* cast as a 9th-level sorcerer.

Soothing Presence of Nature (Ex): Animals and plants may attack Nidrama only if magically compelled.

Development: Nidrama's first action after she reveals herself to the PCs is to invoke her protective aura and use *detect evil* to determine if anyone in their group is evil. If she detects any evil, her expression grows horribly sad and she *plane shifts* away. If she doesn't detect any evil and the PCs don't attack or insult her, she introduces herself and thanks the heroes for any good deeds they have accomplished in the recent past (such as putting a stop to the kidnapping ring, saving Cauldron from floods, protecting citizens from rampaging fiendish umber hulks, and saving Krewis from the mob). She then speaks the following to them:

"Powerful forces of chaos and evil are afoot. I dare not remain here long lest my presence attract the attention of those forces. Yet I could not sit by and watch you march into danger without warning you. The Lord of the Demonskar knows of your approach, and even now his minions prepare for your arrival. They shall use deceit and treachery against you, just as they have done with Alek Tercival before you. You must remain resolute; Alek Tercival must be saved.

"I have no aid to offer you but knowledge. In ages past, I provided to Surabar Spellmason a powerful weapon to assist him in his conflict with the Lord of the Demonskar. This was *Alakast*, a quarterstaff infused with an undying hatred of the fiends of the outer rifts. Unfortunately, *Alakast* was stolen centuries ago, ripped from Spellmason's tomb by a grave robber. Yet do not despair, for it is fated that *Alakast* should be wielded again against the Lord of Demonskar. It has found its way to you, and all that needs be done is for you to claim it. Seek *Alakast* in the lair of my false sisters, beyond the watchful eyes of the north.

"That is all I am at liberty to say...I wish you well in your travails, heroes, and never lose sight of your goals."

Nidrama has little else to say to the PCs, and unless they attack her she returns to the outer planes via a *plane shift*. Her advice to look, "beyond the watchful eyes of the north," is a clue to the location of the magic quarterstaff, which is hidden in area **V14**.

THE ROUND CAVERN

The hunting trail ends abruptly here and the trees thin out considerably to the north, granting a clear view of the sky. To the north, roiling yellow and brown clouds boil above a jagged, barren horizon. You can just make out the jagged line of the Demonskar's rim brooding at the base of these clouds. The ground itself between here and the rim is strewn with razor-sharp ridges of volcanic glass and jagged stone. Ruined strips of what can only be the metal framework of ancient structures protrude from the ground like broken fingers from a shallow grave. One particularly large structure juts from the ground only 20 feet from the end of the trail. The ruin appears like nothing more than a massive pipe protruding from the ground, its 20-foot-wide, 2-foot-thick frame sloping down into the tortured ground at a gentle slope.

This is the entrance to the "round cave" indicated on the back of the hegemonic plate. This pipe allows access to the ancient sewer network that once existed below the spell weaver city. The ruined pipes branch off and change direction many times, forming a maze. Characters who follow the route indicated on the map for about five miles emerge at area **V1** of Vaprak's Voice. If the PCs decide to explore other routes, they find most of them to be collapsed. A few lead to other exits in the area, either opening back into the jungle or protruding from the walls of the Demonskar itself.

CHAPTER THREE: VOICE OF THE DESTROYER

The last mile of the ancient sewer pipe is dark and almost completely intact. As the PCs proceed down its length, a rhythmic rumbling moan grows until it is nearly deafening. When the heroes finally emerge into the open air, the assault on the senses is all but overwhelming. The heroes have come at last to the ruins of Vaprak's Voice, perched on the rim of the Demonskar itself.

VAPRAK'S VOICE FEATURES

The place known as Vaprak's Voice has two entrances, both set into the west wall of a deep fracture radiating from the rim of the vast Demonskar. Both entrances provide access to the ruins of a spell weaver laboratory that partially survived the eldritch blast that formed the Demonskar. For a time, a large tribe of ogres lived here. They gave the place its peculiar name, inspired by the thundering bellow issued from a pair of immense pipes near the entrance when the wind blew. Inside the complex, the areas of Vaprak's Voice can be divided into two distinct categories: rooms built by the spell weavers, which have an odd angular structure, and caverns dug by ogres, which are irregular and roughly hewn. The entire complex is rather dirty and foul smelling due to the sulfuric pollutants in the air about the Demonskar.

The spell weaver rooms are lit by magical plates, sort of still-active emergency lights, and have high ceilings, proportionate to the surface of the floor. The magical plates also heat the room to a comfortable temperature. The corridors can be 10 or 20 feet wide, with 15 or 30 feet high ceilings. Usually, the smaller corridors connect with rooms through perfectly smooth, still functional sliding doors. Like the lights, the doors are magic (CL 12), and open automatically when an intelligent being (Int 6 or higher) approaches within 5 feet. The doors slide up into the ceiling, and remain open for one minute or as long as an intelligent being remains in range. A creature in a doorway that closes must make a Reflex save (DC 12) or be crushed and then pinned by the door, taking 3d6 points of damage. If the magic on the doors is dispelled when they are closed, the doors must be forced or battered open.

Stone Doors: Hardness 8, hp 60, Lift DC 28.

HOW TO READ THE QUICK-REFERENCE FORMAT

This adventure alters the usual format for *Dungeon* adventures in an effort to make key information easier for the DM to find quickly. At the beginning of each encounter are four entries.

Light: Indicates the source and strength of any light present, using the rules in Chapter 9 of the *Player's Handbook*. This doesn't include any light sources the PCs are carrying with them, of course.

Sound: Describes sounds that PCs might hear. Some are automatically heard, while others require Listen checks at the listed DC.

Reaction: Indicates how the PCs' actions in this encounter might affect other areas. Reinforcements from adjacent rooms are the most common kind of reaction. The trigger for the reaction is listed first, then the reaction after a dash. Some reactions occur automatically; others happen only under certain conditions, which are listed parenthetically. For example, the bugbears in the next room over will join the fray in 3 rounds if they succeed at a DC 15 Listen check, made every round of the fight. The reaction line for that encounter would read: "To sounds of battle—bugbears join fight in 3 rounds (Listen DC 15)."

Auras: In order from strongest to weakest, lists the magic auras PCs might see with a *detect magic* spell. The strength of each aura is listed, then in parentheses it lists the source of the aura, the Spellcraft DC required to tell what school the aura is, and what school it is. Keep in mind that PCs might not be able to see every aura listed right away because they don't have line of sight to it. If an encounter has other auras (such as evil auras), those are noted in this section after the magic auras. Auras of other alignments exist, but aren't part of the quick-reference format because they come up in play so rarely.

V1. LANDING

Light: Outdoors (overcast by foul vapors).
Sound: Faint bubbling and whistling from the pool in area **V2** (automatic); Thundering bellow from the vertical chimneys (automatic when the wind blows).
Reaction: None.
Auras: None.

> Out of the dark passage, sharp and jagged rocks hang over a small ledge in the southeast part of a wide pit. The pit, roughly 150 feet in diameter, is set at the bottom of a large fissure among the arid, crystalline hills that border the Demonskar. Puffs of eye-watering smoke seep from a pool at the bottom of the chasm, about 50 feet below. On the other side of the chasm, a pair of gigantic metal tubes protrude from the rock, extending nearly fifty feet and out of the fissure. The burning stink of sulfur and acid is everywhere, and the ground and walls are wet with foul-smelling condensation. A ramp of roughly hewn stone steps wind down into the pit. As the wind rises and sweeps through the fissure, the two looming metal chimneys issue a thundering, deep bellow that echoes across the landscape.

The PCs can descend to area **V2** via the slippery stairway as long as they make Balance checks (DC 12). Failure indicates a rough fall into the pit 50 feet below. Characters who wish to explore the northern reaches of the fissure can do so, although without flight numerous Climb checks (DC 15 for the slippery walls) are required to reach the opposite side of the pit. PCs who fly up and out of the fissure to survey the area are struck by the disturbing geographic illusion of a pair of black eyes and a gaping mouth formed by the chimneys and the pit. Characters who persist in flying above the fissure eventually draw the attention of flying demons from the Demonskar, but such encounters are beyond the scope of this adventure.

The horrendous stink of the foul vapor in the air here forces characters to make a Fortitude save (DC 12) to avoid becoming nauseated for 1d6 minutes. Success indicates that the character becomes accustomed to the smell.

The deafening moan of the twin chimneys lasts for 1d10 rounds, activating once every 1d6 minutes. While the chimneys roar, Listen checks are made at a –10 penalty.

V2. MEPHITIC POOL (EL 5)

Light: Shadowy outdoors (overcast by vapors).
Sound: Loud bubbling and whistling puffs from the chasm (automatic); Thundering bellow from the vertical chimneys (automatic when the wind blows).
Reaction: To sounds of battle—hill giants in area **V4** prepare to ambush anyone who tries to pass through area **V3** (Listen check DC 5, or DC 15 while Vaprak's Voice is howling).
Auras: None; strong evil (Kymzo).

> The water in the shallow pool at the bottom of the chasm bubbles constantly, stirred by acrid vapors escaping from deep underground. A whistling puff of smoke erupts sporadically from the water's surface, spraying the surrounding rocks with warm, whitish droplets. On the west wall of the chasm, a 20-foot-tall, massive iron gate blocks the way to a passage dug into the rock. Over the blocked passage, a second cave mouth opens on the rocky wall, much like the balcony of a giant gatehouse.

The horrendous stink of the foul vapor in the air here forces characters to make a Fortitude save (DC 14) to avoid becoming nauseated for 1d6 minutes. Success indicates that the character becomes accustomed to the smell.

The deafening moan of the twin chimneys lasts for 1d10 rounds, activating once every 1d6 minutes. While the chimneys roar, Listen checks are made at a –10 penalty.

Creature: An ancient and wicked mephit named Kymzo, once part of Nabthatoron's retinue, enjoys bathing in the bubbling pool. Kymzo serves the hags now, often acting as a contact between them and his prior demonic master. Kymzo has orders to let Alek Tercival pass by undisturbed, but no other humanoids are welcome in Vaprak's Voice.

Kymzo, Advanced Steam Mephit: CR 5; Small outsider (fire); HD 6d8+6; hp 36; Init +7 (+3 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative); Spd 30 ft., fly 50 ft. (average); AC 18, touch 14, flat-footed 15; Base Atk +6; Grap +1; Atk +5 melee (1d3–1, claw); Full Atk +5 melee (1d3–1, 2 claws); SA breath weapon, spell-like abilities, summon mephit; SQ damage reduction 5/magic, darkvision 60 ft., fast healing 2, immunity to fire, vulnerability to cold; AL NE; SV Fort +7, Ref +8, Will +6; Str 8, Dex 17, Con 14, Int 12, Wis 13, Cha 17.

Skills: Balance +5, Bluff +12, Climb –1 (+1 with ropes), Diplomacy +14, Disguise +12 (+14 acting), Escape Artist +14 (+15 with ropes), Hide +16, Intimidate +5, Listen +10, Move Silently +12, Spot +10, Use Rope +12 (+14 with bindings).

Feats: Agile, Improved Initiative, Toughness.

Breath Weapon (Su): Cone of steam 10 ft., fire damage 1d4, Reflex half DC 16. Living creatures that fail their saves get a –4 penalty to AC and a –2 penalty to attacks for 3 rounds.

Spell-like Abilities: Once per hour, Kymzo can use *blur* (CL 6). Once per day, he can create a boiling rainstorm (20-ft. square,

CAMPAIGN SEED: NABTHATORON'S HOME

Nabthatoron's lair is located somewhere in the depths of the Demonskar, and is inhabited by the survivors of the demon's original fiendish retinue. This place is beyond the scope of this adventure, but the PCs might want to seek and explore it later, especially if Nabthatoron withdraws from the last fight at the ancient vault (see area **A2**). The glabrezu's lair should feature encounters with lesser demons of various kinds, namely Nabthatoron's unruly subordinates from the Battle of Redgorge.

2d6 fire damage, Reflex half DC 15, CL 6). This ability is the equivalent of a 2nd-level spell.

Summon Mephit (Su): Kymzo may not use this ability due to Nabthatoron's banishment on the Material Plane.

Tactics: If Kymzo notices anyone else descending into this area, Kymzo uses his breath weapon to issue a special warning whistle (slightly different from the usual geyser sound from the pool, Listen DC 25 to notice this) and flies up through the small opening above the gate in area **V3** to warn the hags of the intrusion.

V3. STEEL GATE

Light: Shadowy outdoors (overcast by vapor).

Sound: Loud bubbling and whistling from the pool in area **V2** (automatic); Thundering bellow from the vertical chimneys (automatic when the wind blows).

Reaction: To attempts to raise or destroy the portcullis—the giants in area **V4** prepare actions to throw boulders at anyone who passes under the portcullis (Listen check DC 10, or DC 20 while Vaprak's Voice is bellowing); to characters standing near the portcullis—the giants in area **V4** prepare an ambush (Spot check DC 20).

Auras: None; moderate evil (hill giants in area **V4**).

> The end of this narrow canyon contains a large cave opening in the side of the rift. A massive 15-foot-wide, 20-foot-tall, spiked iron portcullis blocks this entrance. About 15 feet above the gate is a much smaller cave mouth; this one barely two feet in diameter.

This entrance, created by the ogres decades ago, allows access to the surviving part of the ancient spell weaver complex. The portcullis is manned by a hill giant in area **V4** who has been instructed to open the gates only for Alek Tercival or Nabthatoron. The balcony has a 6-foot-tall parapet that offers protection and concealment to the giant. When the portcullis is raised, the bars slide up into the ceiling and block off the smaller entrance above.

This smaller entrance is narrow enough that a Small creature can wriggle through with a successful Escape Artist check (DC 15); for Medium creatures the check is more difficult (DC 30). Creatures larger than that cannot pass through it at all. Tiny or smaller creatures can move through it with ease.

Huge Iron Portcullis: 6 in. thick; Hardness 10; hp 180; break DC 40; lift DC 37.

V4. BALCONY (EL 7)

Light: Faint light filtering in from area **V3** (shadowy illumination).

Sound: Faint bubbling and whistling from the pool in area **V2** (automatic); thundering bellow from the vertical chimneys (automatic when the wind blows).

Reaction: To sounds of battle—the giants in area **V7** come to join the fray (Listen check DC 5).

Auras: None; moderate evil (hill giants).

> A wide balcony looms over the north face of this passageway. An enormous winch system on the balcony above connects to a pair chains and pulleys attached to the portcullis. A giant-sized stool sits behind a 3-foot-tall wooden platform that runs along the balcony. Several spherical rocks are heaped near the balcony's edge.

The winch can be used to raise the portcullis in area **V2** with a successful Strength check (DC 20).

Creatures: A hill giant named Muggo normally watches this area from the balcony above, although not very attentively. If the giant makes a successful Spot check (DC 20) he notices characters passing by below; he relies mostly on the portcullis itself and his hearing to alert him to intruders. If he knows the PCs are in the area (either because the mephit from area V2 warned him or he heard the sounds of battle or portcullis smashing), he lies in wait and begins hurling stones down on the intruders as soon as they pass below the balcony. The balcony and parapet grant cover from attacks initiated from below.

Muggo is under the effects of *Amaranth Elixir*, so his stats are somewhat different than those of the typical hill giant.

Muggo, male hill giant: CR 7; HD 12d8+48; hp 111; Init –1; Spd 30 ft. in hide armor; AC 20, touch 8, flat-footed 20; Base Atk +9; Grp +22; Atk +18 melee (2d8+14, greatclub) or +17 melee (1d4+9, slam) or +8 ranged (1d6+9, rock); Full Atk +18/+13 melee (2d8+14, greatclub) or +17 melee (1d4+9, 2 slams) or +8 ranged (1d6+9, rock); SA rock throwing; SQ low-light vision, rock catching; AL CE; SV Fort +12, Ref +3, Will +3; Str 29, Dex 8, Con 19, Int 6, Wis 8, Cha 7.

Skills: Climb +9, Jump +9, Listen +3, Spot +6.

Feats: Cleave, Improved Bull Rush, Improved Sunder, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (greatclub).

Development: If the heroes retreat from Vaprak's Voice and return later but haven't defeated the giants, they find all of the hill giants from area **V4** and **V6** waiting for them on the balcony above.

V5. GIANT ENTRANCE

Light: Shadowy outdoors.

CAMPAIGN SEED: THE SPELL WEAVER RUINS

Although most of the spell weaver structures in the jungles west of Cauldron were swept away by the explosion that produced the Demonskar, it is possible that the complex at Vaprak's Voice is not the only surviving remnant of their civilization. Other ruins left by the spell weavers are likely to be subterranean places, buried deeply in lava, rubble, and ash. These places likely feature enigmatic hazards like the *Starry Mirror* and marvelous devices like *Amaranth Elixir*. They also could contain magically frozen creatures, constructs, or even live spell weavers in suspended animation.

Sound: Faint bubbling and whistling puffs from the pool in Area **V2** (automatic); thundering bellow from the vertical chimneys (automatic when the wind blows).
Reaction: To attempts to destroy the barrier—the giants in area **V7** prepare an ambush.
Auras: None.

A 15-foot-wide, 15-foot-tall cave mouth opens on the rocky wall here, obstructed by a crude wall of logs and boards bound together with rope and huge iron nails. From the cave, a winding path leads downhill toward the misty, blighted heart of the Demonskar itself.

The wall of wood is a makeshift "doorway" built by the hill giants to keep out intruders. The wall weighs 1,500 lbs., so the average hill giant has little problem hefting it aside when necessary.

The path from the cave mouth allows a safe walk through the large crack on the Demonskar's rim, and can be used by the heroes in a successive adventure to reach Nabthatoron's lair (see the "Nabthatoron's Home" campaign seed).

Wood Wall: 1 ft. thick; Hardness 5; hp 120; break DC 26.

V6. MEETING HALL

Light: Dim light from ceiling tiles (shadowy illumination).
Sound: Bellow from the vertical chimneys outside (automatic when the wind blows).
Reaction: None.
Auras: Strong (lights on the ceiling, DC 21, evocation); faint evil (if the ettins from area **V9** are present).

The walls of this circular, domed chamber are carved and polished with exceptional precision and skill to look like cascades of petrified liquid. Several metal disks on the ceiling 60 feet above provide a pearly illumination as bright as torchlight. The center of the room is occupied by a bizarre, 30-foot-wide, 7-foot-tall metal and stone sculpture made of truncated pillars, short ramps, suspended slabs of stone, and a total of twenty chairs with triple arm-rests.

This hall was originally used as a meeting place for the spell weavers; the object in the center of the room is analogous to a meeting table. The spell weaver meeting table featured many mobile parts, but is now totally inert.

The door to the north is locked, the key to which is kept by the fire giant in area **V10**.

Giant Door (strong, ironbound wood): 8 in. thick; Hardness 6; hp 80; break DC 30, good lock (Open Lock DC 30).

Development: If the complex is on alert, the five ettins from area **V9** are found here. The ettins fight any intruders to the death. A few rounds after the ettins are defeated, the three fey hags approach the PCs from area **V11**, disguised as trumpet archons (via *veil*); they also use *mirage arcana* to generate a heavenly choir and wisps of pleasing floral scents to accompany their entrance into the chamber. They smile heavenly at the PCs and thank them for cleansing "this ancient and sacred site" from the taint of those terrible giants. One of the false archons carries a chalice filled with *Amaranth Elixir* and offers it to the most charismatic PC, saying that his heroism against the giants has earned him the right to drink the nectar of the Gods. The hags, however, have laced the liquid in the chalice with dark reaver powder (Fortitude save DC 20, primary damage 2d6 Con, secondary damage 1d6 Con plus 1d6 Str). If a PC drinks the liquid the effect of the poison and the *Amaranth Elixir* stack together. If the character succumbs to the poison, the hags recoil in horror and exclaim, "Only one who had been tainted with evil would react so to the nectar! You must destroy this hidden agent of evil at once!" The hags hope to trick the PCs into arguing or fighting amongst themselves so they can divide and conquer the group. Once their ruse is uncovered, they turn *invisible* and attempt to retreat to area **V13**.

V7. HILL GIANT CAVE (EL 10)

Light: Dim light from outside during the day.
Sound: Bellow from the vertical chimneys outside (automatic when the wind blows).
Reaction: To sounds of combat—the ettins in area **V9** and the giant in area **V4** come to aid their allies (Listen check DC 5, DC 15 while Vaprak's Voice is howling.)
Auras: Moderate evil (hill giants).

This place reeks of sweaty, unwashed brutes and scorched meat. Four 12-foot-long stone beds covered with filthy animal skins lie near the walls. A huge firepit dominates the middle of the cave, under a chimney hole in the 40-foot-high ceiling above. The charred, dismembered skeleton of a huge ape lies over the bed of ashes. A pile of 1-foot-diameter polished spheres of rocks is stacked neatly against the south wall, with a hammer, a chisel, and an emery nearby. Four large burlap sacks sit against the west wall.

Creatures: The four hill giants the hags recruited sleep, feast, and carouse in this room. Three of them can be found here while the fourth guards area **V4**.

Golot, Pogus, and Tibor, hill giants: hp 123, 107, and 99, see area **V4** for statistics.

Treasure: The four burlap sacks contain the personal belongings of the hill giants. Aside from the usual mundane items they carry in the sacks, they contain a total of 2,100 sp, 950 gp, a silver ring worth 400 gp, and a gold-plated halfling skull worth 250 gp.

V8. HALLWAY

Light: Dim light from ceiling (shadow illumination).
Sound: Faint rumble from the furnace in Area **V10** (increases as the PCs walk northward along the corridor, automatic); faint bellow from the vertical chimneys outside (automatic when the wind blows).
Reaction: To conversation—the ettins from area **V9** attack if they have not been stationed in area **V6** (Listen check DC 5).

Auras: Strong evocation (lights on the ceiling, DC 21).

This huge, 20-foot-wide, 25-foot-high corridor is blocked by a cave-in at its northern end. Several magic plates on the ceiling fill the corridor with a soft, gray light.

The arcade to Area **V10** emanates the bluish gleam of flames from the furnace there. The crude, dark passage on the east wall, dug by the giants, leads to the barracks of the hag covey's ogres.

V9. ETTIN BARRACKS (EL 11)

Light: Torchlight.

Sound: Bellow from the vertical chimneys outside (automatic when the wind blows).

Reaction: If the PCs did not encounter them before, the latter are resting here.

Auras: Faint evil (if the ogres are present).

Five nasty-looking piles of animal skins occupy this filthy cave. Several sacks, clay lamps and vases, cookware, and crude tools are scattered here and there, and six torches have been jammed into cracks in the walls.

Creatures: The five ettins at the covey's service sleep here. They are only encountered here if the characters manage to make it this far without alerting the complex. The ettins don't have their own treasure; the fire giant from area **V10** has promised them payments if they agree to serve as guardians. Whenever the ettins try to collect on their payments, though, the fire giant confuses them with double-talk and sends them away empty-handed.

Ettins (5): hp 65 each, *Monster Manual* 106.

V10. SMITHY (EL 12)

Light: Dim gray light from the ceiling and bright fiery blue light from the furnace.

Sound: Low rumble from the spell weaver furnace (automatic); faint bellow from the vertical chimneys outside (automatic when the wind blows).

Reaction: To sounds of combat—any giants remaining in area **V7** come to aid their boss.

Auras: Strong (lights on the ceiling and the furnace, DC 21, evocation); faint (Dugobras's greataxe, DC 18, evocation); moderate evil (Dugobras).

This huge rectangular room has a prism-shaped, 50-foot-high ceiling. The walls are sculpted with a complex work. A shiny, metal furnace stands against the north wall, with rumbling, vertical blue flames inside. A large mound of broken anvils are stacked against the side of the furnace, and several more anvil fragments lie heaped inside the furnace, glowing red-hot. An enormous hammer lies on a big iron anvil in the middle of the room, beyond which several more anvils are stacked haphazardly. A great chair sits in the southwestern corner aside a huge metal chest. A 7-foot-wide cubic cage of silver and platinum, its bars etched with mystical symbols, lies nearby, propped up against a pile of metal scrap.

A year ago, an unusually intelligent fire giant named Dugobras was contacted by the Cagewrights and hired to forge *soulcages* for them. The cagewrights told him of a powerful magic forge located on the rim of the Demonskar where he could build the cages. Upon arriving at Vaprak's Voice, Dugobras impressed the hags with his eloquence and strength and they agreed to let him take up residence in this room. He has since finished building *soulcages*, and now toils to build himself a set of masterwork full plate armor. The cage leaning against his stack of spare anvils is a discarded prototype *soulcage*. Dugobras' smithwork is so intense that he breaks an average of one anvil per week.

The flames in the spell weaver furnace are supernaturally hot. Any creature touching them takes 4d6 point of fire damage and must succeed in a Reflex save DC 15 or catch fire (see *Dungeon Master's Guide* 86). A creature placed completely inside the furnace takes 16d6 points of fire damage per round. The anvils in the furnace are kept ready for throwing. The magic fire in the furnace is permanent, but can be dispelled normally (caster level 20).

The chest, which weighs just over a ton, can be opened with a combination lock. The combination lock has four wheels with numbers from 0 to 9, and only Dugobras knows the key (9383). The combination lock can also be opened with a successful Open Locks check (DC 35). The chest is also protected by a **Trap**.

Iron Chest: Hardness 10; hp 60; break DC 28.

Creatures: Dugobras is more of an artisan than a warrior-type, and fights only if absolutely necessary. He prefers to face the heroes in Area **V10** to make good use of his hot projectiles.

Dugobras does not make use of *Amaranth Elixir*, as he finds its side effects distasteful.

Dugobras, Male Fire Giant Exp5: CR 12; Large giant (fire); HD 15d8+5d6+160; hp 258; Init +0; Spd 30 ft. in half-plate armor; AC 24, touch 9, flat-footed 24; Base Atk +14; Grap +29; Atk +26 melee (2d8+17/×3, +1 *huge warhammer*) or +25 melee (1d4+11, slam) or +14 ranged (2d8+11 plus 2d6 fire, red-hot anvil fragment); Full Atk +23/+16/+11 melee (2d6+17/×3, +1 *huge warhammer*) or +25 melee (1d4+11, 2 slams) or +14 ranged (2d6+10 plus 2d6 fire, red-hot anvil fragment); Space/Reach 10 ft./10 ft.; SA rock throwing; SQ immunity to fire, low-light vision, rock catching, vulnerability to cold; AL NE; SV Fort +18, Ref +6, Will +10; Str 32, Dex 10, Con 26, Int 15, Wis 12, Cha 13.

Skills: Climb +20, Craft (alchemy) +7, Craft (armorsmithing) +12, Craft (blacksmithing) +23, Disable Device +7, Intimidate +19, Jump +20, Knowledge (religion) +7, Listen +6, Spot +19, Use Magic Device +14.

Feats: Cleave, Great Cleave, Improved Bull Rush, Improved Sunder, Power Attack, Skill Focus (Craft blacksmithing), Skill Focus (Use Magic Device).

Languages: Common, Giant, Ignan.

Possessions: +1 huge warhammer, +3 chain shirt, dagger, *wand of displacement* (14 charges), *wand of cure serious wounds* (22 charges), *wand of dispel magic* (18 charges).

Tactics: Dugobras' first action in combat is to use his *wand of displacement* on himself; if he fails to activate the wand with a Use Magic Device check (DC 20) on this first round he abandons that tactic and starts hurling red-hot anvils at the heroes until they engage him in melee.

Trap: The large metal chest actually consists of two metal chests, the second of which is slightly smaller and encased inside the first. The space between the inner and outer chest is full of pressurized alchemist's fire. If the chest is broken, punctured, or forced open, the stuff explodes in a blast of fire and shrapnel. This explosion destroys the potions and scrolls in the chest but does not harm the other contents.

Alchemist's Fire Trap: CR 7; mechanical; touch trigger; no reset; chest explodes (6d6 fire damage, Reflex half DC 20); multiple targets (all targets within 10 ft. of the chest); Search DC 30, Disable Device DC 30.

Treasure: The prototype *soulcage* is not magic, but the precious metals (silver and platinum) used to forge it have a value of 2,000 gp. The *soulcage* weighs 300 pounds. A character who studies the mystical symbols etched on the prototype's surface and makes a Knowledge (arcana) check (DC 24) can tell that conjuration, abjuration, and necromancy magic were part of its creation. A successful Search check (DC 15) made while examining the pile of metal scrap nearby uncovers a small unlocked metal crate. Dugobras keeps two crystal jugs filled with ten doses of alchemist's fire apiece in the crate. Near the metal crate sits a half-full pot of hardened, sticky resin (used to set the trap in area **V12**).

The large metal chest contains 280 gp, 4,350 sp, a pouch containing 12 pieces of amber (100 gp each), a golden water boiler (worth 120 gp), a *+1 arrow deflection light metal shield* (emblazoned with the face of a wolf biting the shaft of an arrow), a *wand of lightning* (CL 7, 17 charges left), three *potions of cat's grace*, three *potions of protection from elements* (*electricity*), and a divine scroll with *magic fang*, *hold animal*, and *remove disease* (CL 5).

V11. FOUNTAIN

Light: Dim light from ceiling (shadowy light).
Sound: Bubbling from apparatus on the west wall (automatic).
Reaction: None.
Auras: Strong (lights on the ceiling, sliding doors, fountain, DC 21, evocation), strong (*Amaranth Elixir*, DC 21, transmutation).

> Six white pillars with capitols shaped like slender hands support a 20-foot-tall ceiling in this rectangular room. A 3-foot-diameter crystal globe is embedded ten feet up on each pillar. These hollow globes are half-filled with bubbling, transparent liquid that seems to replenish itself as quickly as it drains out of a hole in each globe's base. At the base of each pillar, a silver spigot allows this liquid to drain out of the pillar and down a narrow gutter to collect in a basin in the floor in the room's center. There, the liquid turns a deep purple color that evaporates as quickly as it is filled. A golden chalice sits on the basin's rim near the southeastern pillar.

This alchemical fountain is the source of the *Amaranth Elixir*. The crystal globes that generate the *elixir* are fairly difficult to destroy, but if one is wrecked all four globes explode. The resulting spray of crystal shards and boiling liquid fills the room, inflicting 6d6 slashing damage and 3d6 fire damage to all creatures in the room. A successful Reflex saving throw (DC 20) halves the damage. The apparatus no longer produces the *elixir* if it is ruined.

Treasure: The *Amaranth Elixir* increases the drinker's physical strength, but causes terrible strain on the drinker's sanity. Its exact effects depend on the imbiber's size (see "The *Amaranth Elixir*" sidebar).

The golden chalice on the basin's rim is of dwarven manufacture (value 350 gp). The hags use it as a prop when they offer the *Amaranth Elixir* to Alek Tercival or the PCs.

V12. EXPLOSIVE VAPORS (EL 8)

Light: Dim light from ceiling (shadowy light).
Sound: None.
Reaction: None.
Auras: Strong (lights on the ceiling, sliding door, DC 21, evocation).

The areas beyond this door have collapsed, leaving only a small pocket of space beyond the door. A vent in the floor allows flammable vapor to seep into this remaining space.

THE AMARANTH ELIXIR

This magic *elixir* was used by the spell weavers to augment their slave laborers and make them easier to control. It greatly enhances a creature's Strength, but damages his Wisdom. The *Amaranth Elixir* in the fountain is permanently active, but remains so for just an hour if taken away in a container. The exact effect the *Amaranth Elixir* has on the drinker depends on his size.

Drinker's size	Strength	Wisdom
Diminutive or smaller	no effect	no effect
Tiny	+2	–1
Small	+4	–2
Medium	+8	–4
Large	+4	–2
Huge	+2	–1
Gargantuan or bigger	no effect	no effect

The *Amaranth Elixir's* effects can theoretically last forever, although there's a 25% chance the effect ends each time the sun sets. When this happens, the user becomes fatigued.

Trap: The crafty Dugobras smeared an alchemical resin of his own design into the guides of the door so that when it closes, *the resin fills the gaps in the door's frame. Once the resin dries* it forms an airtight seal. This allows the small space beyond to become pressurized with the flammable gas. Like the other spell weaver doors, this one opens when an intelligent being (Int 6+) comes within 5 feet. The resin contains tiny bits of flint and steel, so that when the door opens it generates a cascade of sparks that instantly ignites the pressurized gas beyond.

Explosive Vapor Trap: CR 8; mechanical; proximity trigger; manual reset; gas (explosive, 10d6 fire, DC 18 Reflex save half damage); multiple targets (all targets within 30 feet of the trap); Search DC 25; Disable Device DC 30.

V13. THRONE ROOM (EL 12)

Light: Dim light from ceiling (equivalent to torchlight).
Sound: None.
Reaction: None.
Auras: Strong (lights on the ceiling, sliding doors, fountain, DC 21, evocation); moderate (Gaflon's shard weapons, DC 25, evocation); faint (hags' rings, DC 24, abjuration); moderate (*hag eye, DC 26, divination*); *moderate evil (half-fey green hags).*

The north portion of this square room contains a 7-foot-high platform connected to an L-shaped ramp. A strip of bas-reliefs depicting gaunt, magic-wielding, six-armed creatures decorates the base of the platform. Each creature holds a disk in its lowest set of arms, which is represented like a shining sun. The rays emanating from the disks, engraved in the stone as straight lines, form the background of the composition. A white marble throne with triple armrests sits on the platform itself.

Once the seat of a spell weaver leader, this room is now used by the hag covey to meet with important visitors. When the heroes enter the complex, the three hags are here speaking with a nerra varoot named Gaflon about Alek Tercival's fate.

Creatures: Tribata, Sminelpa, and Olomasta are a trio of *identical twin sisters, born of an unholy union between fey and* green hag. They look similar to most green hags but sport the a pair of hairy antennas on their wrinkled foreheads and a pair of elongated, sickly-brown moth-like wings on their backs. When folded, the wings look much like dirty, ragged cloaks.

Gaflon looks like a hairless humanoid with mirror-like skin. He wears only a pair of soft boots and a loincloth with a leather belt, but carries a wicked-looking shard of mirrored glass the size of a longsword.

Tribata, Sminelpa, and Olomasta, Half-Fey Green Hags Rog2 (3): CR 9; Medium fey; HD 11d6+11; hp 55, 51, 45; Init +4; Spd 30 ft., fly 60 ft. (good), swim 30 ft.; AC 27, touch 16, flat-footed 23; Base Atk +10; Grap +13; Atk +13 melee (1d6+3, claw); Full Atk +13 melee (1d6+3, 2 claws); SA sneak attack +1d6, spell-like abilities, weakness, mimicry; SQ darkvision 90

ft., evasion, immune to enchantment spells and effects, low-light vision, spell resistance 18, trapfinding; AL CE; SV Fort +6, Ref +14, Will +8; Str 17, Dex 19, Con 12, Int 15, Wis 15, Cha 22.

Individual Spell-like Abilities: At will—*charm person* (DC 17), *dancing lights, disguise self, ghost sound* (DC 16), *invisibility, pass without trace, tongues, water breathing*; 3/day—*detect law, protection from law*; 1/day—*confusion** (DC 20), *dominate person** (DC 21), *eyebite** (DC 22), *faerie fire**, *hypnotism* (DC 18), *sleep** (DC 17), *suggestion** (DC 19). Caster level 11th.

*Indicates a hag's selected half-fey spell-like ability for the day.

Covey Spell-like Abilities: 3/day—*animate dead, bestow curse* (DC 19), *control weather, dream, forcecage, mind blank, mirage arcana* (DC 21), *polymorph, veil* (DC 22), *vision*. These abilities can be used as a full-round action by all three hags if they are within 10 feet of one another. Caster level 11th.

Weakness (Su): A green hag's successful touch attack deals 2d4 points of Strength damage (Fortitude negates, DC 22).

Mimicry (Su): Green hags can imitate the sound of animals found in the jungles surrounding the Demonskar.

Skills: Bluff +16, Concentration +13, Craft (weaving) +14, Diplomacy +8, Disguise +16 (+18 acting), Hide +16, Intimidate +8, Knowledge (arcana) +14, Knowledge (the planes) +14, Listen +16, Spot +16, Swim +15.

Feats: Ability Focus (weakness), Alertness, Great Fortitude, Improved Natural Attack (claw).

Languages: Common, Giant.

Possessions: Each of the hags wears a matching *ring of protection* +2. Olomasta also carries the covey's *hag eye*.

Gaflon, Nerra Varoot Rog4: CR 5; Medium outsider (extraplanar); HD 1d8+4d6+5; hp 24; Init +6; Spd 30 ft.; AC 15, touch 12, flat-footed 13; Base Atk +4; Grap +5; Atk +7 melee (1d8+2/19-20, +2 *wounding shard longsword*) or +8 ranged (1d4+2/19-20, +2 *wounding shard dagger*); SA sneak attack +2d6, spell-like abilities; SQ darkvision 60 ft., cold resistance 5, electricity resistance 5, evasion, fire resistance 5, mirror jump, reflective spell resistance 13, sonic vulnerability, trapfinding, trap sense +1, uncanny dodge; AL N; SV Fort +4, Ref +8, Will +5; Str 12, Dex 15, Con 13, Int 11, Wis 14, Cha 17.

Skills: Bluff +9, Climb +8, Diplomacy +9, Disguise +9 (+12 acting), Gather Information +7, Intimidate +5, Knowledge (the planes) +4, Listen +8), Move Silently +8, Open Locks +9, Sense Motive +8, Sleight of Hand +8, Spot +8.

Feats: Exotic Weapon Proficiency (shard longsword)[B], Exotic Weapon Proficiency (shard dagger)[B], Improved Initiative, Weapon Focus (shard longsword).

Languages: Common, Nerra.

Possessions: +2 *wounding shard longsword*, +2 *wounding shard dagger*, lockpicks, 8 blue quartzes (100 gp value each) in pouch.

Spell-like Abilities: 3/day—*disguise self*; 1/day—*mirror image*.

Mirror Jump (Su): A nerra can move through mirrored and reflective surfaces at will (similar to *shadow walk*, but traveling is through the Plane of Mirrors). This way, they can move between mirrors up to one mile away.

Reflective Spell Resistance (Sp): Targeted spells that fail to overcome a nerra's SR are reflected back to the caster. Gaze attacks are also reflected back to the source, and the nerra is immune to their effects.

Sonic Vulnerability (Ex): A nerra takes 150% damage from sonic attacks.

Tactics: The three hags try to perform different actions during a combat round (i.e. one makes claw attacks, one uses her weakness touch, and one uses a spell-like ability) in an attempt to make coordinated defenses against their tactics more difficult. If two hags are killed, the third tries to escape and seek Nabthatoron's help.

Gaflon tries to slip away to the *Starry Mirror*, where he can call a group of nerra kalareem for help (area **V15**).

Development: If the PCs arrive here without alerting the complex, they find the hags and the nerra in their normal forms. Otherwise, the heroes likely meet the hags after their battle with the ettins (area **V6**) and Gaflon at the *Starry Mirror* (area **V15**).

V14. HAG COVEY'S LAIR (EL 9)

Light: Dim light from ceiling (equivalent to torchlight).

Sound: None.

Reaction: None.

Auras: Strong (lights on the ceiling, sliding door, chromatic disk in the skeleton's hands, DC 21, evocation), strong (spell weaver skeletons, DC 20, necromancy); strong undead (spell weaver skeletons).

> Three large beds sit in this room. Along the north wall hang a set of golden baboon masks. The smooth stone walls and the floor are covered by colorful and bizarre tapestries and carpets. An elaborate weaver's loom occupies the southwest corner. Various skeins of wool of many different colors are piled near the loom, next to a basket of sewing tools. A wooden chest sits in the southeast corner.

Creatures: The hags found four spell weaver skeletons in the surrounding ruins and animated them to serve as guardians.

NERRA WEAPONS

Nerras employ swords and daggers made of the substance of the Plane of Mirrors. They resemble shards of broken mirror set with a shiny hilt. A shard weapon is a *+2 wounding* weapon that requires an Exotic Weapon Proficiency feat to wield. Without this feat, the weapon's *wounding* quality cannot be utilized. Nerra can utilize shard weapons with the Weapon Finesse feat if they have it. The magic qualities of nerra weapons in this adventure are maintained by contact with a living nerra; if the weapon is stolen or its owner slain, the weapon shatters into thousands of fragments. A nerra can rebuild its weapon only on the Plane of Mirrors.

The skeletons still carry their spell weaver chromatic discs (see *Monster Manual II* 118), although in their new undead states they can't make use of the devices. If any PC tries to activate one of these discs with Use Magical Device, the disk explodes, dealing 4d10 points of damage within a 30-foot radius.

The skeletons have been commanded by the hags to defend the chamber from any non-hag intruders.

Spell Weaver Skeletons (4): CR 5; Medium undead; HD 10d12; hp 78 each; Init +8; Spd 30 ft.; AC 16, touch 14, flat-footed 12; Base Atk +6; Grp +5; Atk +5 melee (1d4–1, claw); Full Atk +5 melee (1d4–1, 4 claws); SQ damage reduction 5/bludgeoning, immunity to cold; AL NE; SV Fort +3, Ref +7, Will +7; Str 9, Dex 18, Con —, Int —, Wis 10, Cha 1.

Feat: Improved Initiative.

Treasure: The five baboon masks on the north wall are very similar to the one in Tygot's shop in Cauldron (see "Tygot's Old Things"). The carpets on the walls and floor (24 in total, each weighing 20 lbs.) are worth 200 gp each. The skeins of wool are high quality, well-dyed stuff (15 bales worth 20 gp and weighing 10 lbs. each. The chest in the southeast corner is unlocked, and contains the hag covey's treasure (see **Treasure** below).

The chest contains 130 gp in a large purse, 12 pieces of assorted silverware (jugs, plates, bowls) worth a total 450 gp, a golden armband (worth 120 gp), a wizard scroll (*prying eyes, greater dispel magic, sequester*, caster level 14th), a *necklace of fireballs* (type III, with just one 5D6 and two 3d6 spheres left), two *potions of cure serious wounds*, four *potions of cure moderate wounds*, and a *+1 light mace*.

A successful Search check (DC 25) made while searching the wall behind the baboon masks uncovers a hidden switch built into the wall. If the switch is triggered, a shallow drawer slides out of the wall. Wrapped in silk inside this drawer is *Alakast*, a *+1 bane vs. evil outsiders quarterstaff*. Both heads of the quarterstaff bear identical magic qualities. The hags sent some of their minions out to steal this staff from Surabar's tomb some time ago; they originally intended to present the staff to Nabthatoron as a trophy to aid in securing his friendship, but the glabrezu approached the hags on his own. Now, the hags keep *Alakast* hidden here as a "secret weapon" against the demon, should he ever betray the hags.

V15. STARRY MIRROR (EL 8)

Light: Dim light from ceiling (shadowy light).

Sound: Low hum from the Starry Mirror (automatic).

Reaction: None.

Auras: Strong (lights on the ceiling, sliding door, DC 21, evocation), overwhelming (*Starry Mirror*, DC 35, illusion and transmutation).

> The ceiling in this room forms a four-sided dome, much like an inverted pyramid. The apex of the dome is 30 feet off the ground. An odd, 10-foot-wide pentagonal mirror hangs on the west wall, from where it casts a dark reflection of the room. This reflection is distorted in an unsettling way, and dotted with shimmering, star-like pinpoints of white light. A single chair of white stone with triple armrests sits in the middle of the room, facing the mirror. A colorful hexagonal diagram is engraved in the floor surrounding the mirror.

Centuries ago, the nerra of the Plane of Mirrors allowed the spell weavers to build and use the *Starry Mirror* for a high price. The *mirror* has lain dormant for centuries, and when Alek Tercival passed through the *mirror* at the urging of the three hags, the nerra sent Gaflon back through to discuss the matter.

The *Starry Mirror* was originally linked to four other portals at distant points across the Material Plane, of which only one other remains functional today. The *Starry Mirror* also allows intelligent creatures to use the *mirror jump* ability of the nerra. The diagram on the floor represents a scheme of the primary and secondary colors. This scheme, together with the string of numbers on the hegemonic plate, can give the PCs clues to successfully navigate the maze beyond the *Starry Mirror*.

Any PC who touches the *Starry Mirror* finds that it is actually a vertical surface of cold, reflective liquid, which can be passed through with ease. Whoever does so finds himself in one of the pentagonal rooms of the mirror maze.

A PC who looks intently into the *Starry Mirror* sees five pentagonal windows floating under its dark surface. Four of them show nothing but dull white light. The fifth shows an indistinct image of Alek Tercival sitting next to a large metal door in a stone wall, his expression filled with despair.

Creatures: If Gaflon escaped from any conflicts in area **V13**, the characters find him sitting on the spell weaver throne. He has used his *disguise self* spell-like ability to appear as Alek Tercival. In this guise, the varoot tries to distract and flank the heroes as other nerra silently emerge from the *Starry Mirror*. Gaflon knows Alek Tercival's appearance, having spied on him often through the *Starry Mirror* and into the ancient vault. When the PCs enter the room, Gaflon pretends to wake up from a magical *sleep*. He warns the PCs that something terrible is going to happen in Cauldron very soon, and that the *mirror* on the wall reflects future events. He claims that he is not intelligent enough to discern the truth in the mirror's reflections and asks the heroes to help.

A group of three nerra kalareem observes this room from the Plane of Mirrors. They intend to discourage further trespassers from entering the *Starry Mirror*, and are also observing Alek Tercival in the ancient vault, content with the fact that the paladin seems to be doomed. They wait for Gaflon's signal (he drops his dagger on the floor) before attacking.

Kalareem Nerra (4): CR 3; Medium-Size Outsider (extraplanar); HD 3d8+6; hp 19; Init +3; Spd 30 ft.; AC 18, touch 13, flat-footed 15; Base Atk +3; Grap +4; Atk +9 melee (1d8+3/19-20, *+2 wounding shard longsword*); Full Atk +5 melee (1d8+3/19-20, 2 *+2 wounding shard longswords*); SA shard spray, spell-like abilities; SQ cold resistance 10, darkvision 60 ft., electricity resistance 10, fire resistance 10, mirror jump, reflective spell

resistance 15, sonic vulnerability; AL N; SV Fort +5, Ref +6, Will +5; Str 13, Dex 16, Con 15, Int 10, Wis 14, Cha 13.

Spell-like Abilities: 1/day—*mirror image*. Caster level 12th.

Shard Spray (Su): Three times per day a kalareem can release a spray of mirror shards (30 ft. cone, slashing damage 3d4 plus 2 points of cumulative bleeding damage per round).

Mirror Jump (Su): A nerra can move through mirrored and reflective surfaces at will (similar to *shadow walk*, but traveling through the Plane of Mirrors). This way, they can move between mirrors up to one mile away.

Reflective Spell Resistance (Sp): Spells that fail to overcome a nerra's SR are reflected back to the caster.

Sonic Vulnerability (Ex): A nerra takes 150% damage from sonic attacks.

Skills: Bluff +7, Diplomacy +6, Disguise +7 (+9 to act in character), Hide +9, Intimidate +7, Knowledge (arcana) +6, Knowledge (the planes) +6, Listen +8, Move Silently +9, Sense Motive +7, Spot +8.

Feats: Exotic Weapon Proficiency (shard longsword)[B], Two Weapon Fighting, Weapon Finesse, Weapon Focus (shard longsword)[B].

Languages: Common, Nerra.

Possessions: Two *+2 wounding shard longswords.*

Development: If the heroes kill at least two nerra, the survivors try to retreat to the Plane of Mirrors to report what happened to their superiors. This can eventually lead to further involvement with the nerra in the campaign.

CHAPTER FOUR: THROUGH THE SPECTRUM

In order to reach or contact Alek, the characters must travel through the *Starry Mirror* to his side. Long-range communication with Alek (such as with a *sending* spell) is useless, since he is mad with despair and in no condition to form intelligent replies. This adventure can conclude only if the PCs enter the *Starry Mirror*.

Once they pass through the *Starry Mirror*, the PCs find themselves in an extra-dimensional maze made up of an indefinite number of identical, pentagon-shaped, 15-foot-high rooms. The only differences between rooms are the colors of the ambient light: blue, yellow, red, violet, orange, and green (the primary and secondary colors, shown in the floor diagram of area **V15**). Each wall has a pentagonal portal the same size of the *Starry Mirror*. The semi-transparent surface of the portals reflects the room around it but with a tint of the appropriate hue.

The extra-dimensional space duplicates separately for all who enter, so the heroes always find themselves alone inside the rooms, no matter how many are inside at the same time. Sound carries across these duplicate rooms as a metallic echo, so characters can communicate with each other. Exit from the *Starry*

Starry Mirror

BEYOND THE STARRY MIRROR

Although the *Starry Mirror* contains an indefinite number of small chambers, there are only six varieties, each with a distinct tint (red, orange, yellow, green, blue, and violet). Each room has five portals that lead to virtually identical chambers tinted to correspond to the portal used to access them (walking through a blue portal, for example, leads an adventurer to the blue-tinted chamber). Cracking the puzzle's code to reach Alek Tercival requires decoding the numeric instructions on the Hegemonic Plate, which correspond to the colored hexagonal floor diagram in area **V15**.

Keep the following points in mind when running this potentially confusing puzzle:

1) A PC who enters the *Starry Mirror* appears in a random color room (roll 1d6).

2) All PCs appear alone in the color room, even if two PCs appear in a room of the same color.

3) When a PC enters a portal in a color room, he appears in the middle of the color room of the corresponding color.

4) To reach the final exit chamber (a gray-tinted pantagonal chamber with a single mirror leading to area **A1**), a PC must follow the combination on the Hegemonic Plate, extrapolating the combination *numbers* (3, 4, 5, 1, 2, 3) into a series of combination *colors*. To do this, the PC must find the right successive color in the floor diagram in area **V15** (above), counting the colors in clockwise order from the appearance room color.

HEGEMONIC PLATE NUMBER DETAILS

SEQUENCE EXAMPLE

1) Random entrance color (1d6): "5" = "blue" (the PC appears in the blue room).

2) First combination color: "3" (first combination number on the Hegemonic Plate) = "orange" (third color from blue in a clockwise order).

3) Second combination color: "4" (second number on the Hegemonic Plate) = "violet" (fourth color from orange in a clockwise order).

4) Third combination color: "5" = "blue".

5) Fourth combination color: "1" = "violet".

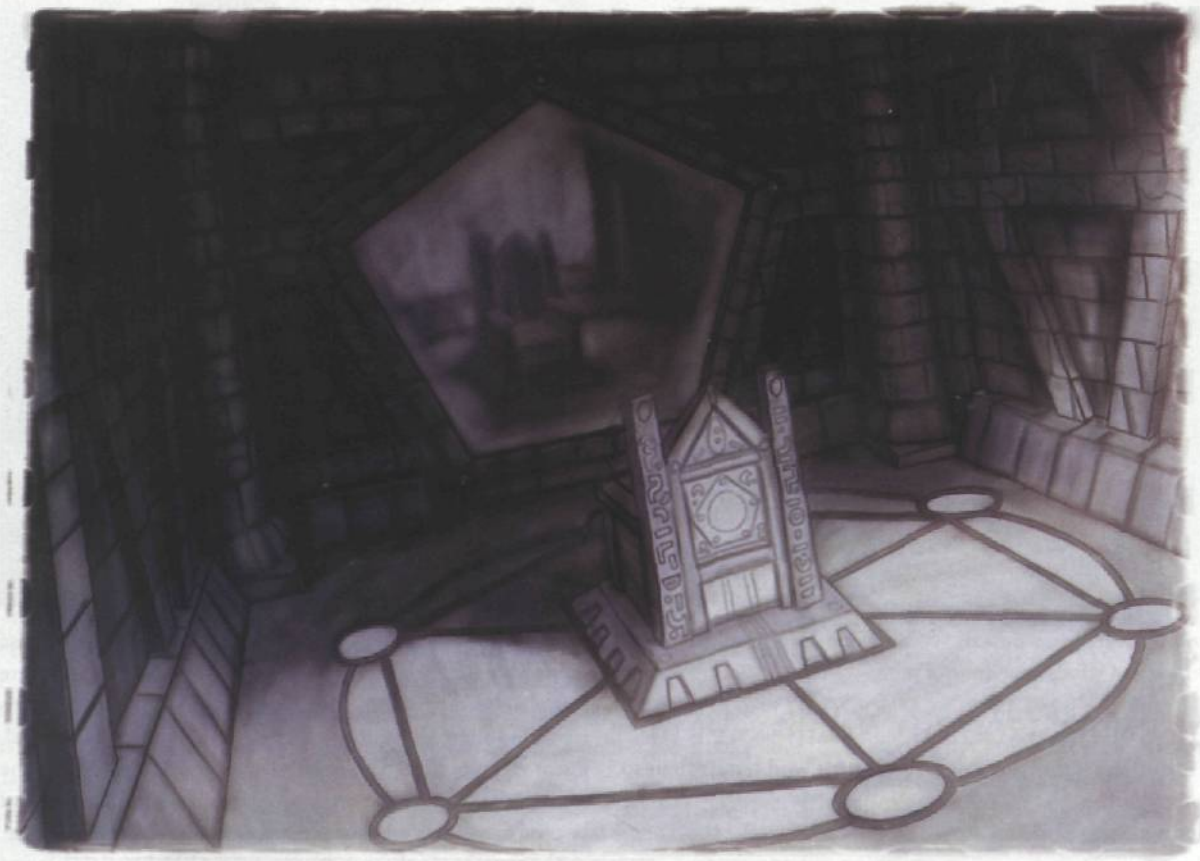
6) Fifth combination color: "2" = "orange".

7) Sixth combination color: "3" = "blue".

8) At this point, upon entering the blue portal, the character appears in the exit room instead of the blue room.

NOTES

- No matter how many PCs are inside the *Starry Mirror*, PCs always appear alone in the color rooms. Their voices, however, can be heard by other party members in the *Starry Mirror*.
- Objects abandoned in the rooms disappear when when the PC leaves the room.
- The nerra can mirror jump through the pentagonal *mirror* in area **V15** and the destination *mirror* in area **A1**, but may not mirror jump into the color rooms inside the *Starry Mirror* itself.



Mirror back into area **V15** is impossible; the only way to escape this maze is through the one surviving exit point into the ancient vault.

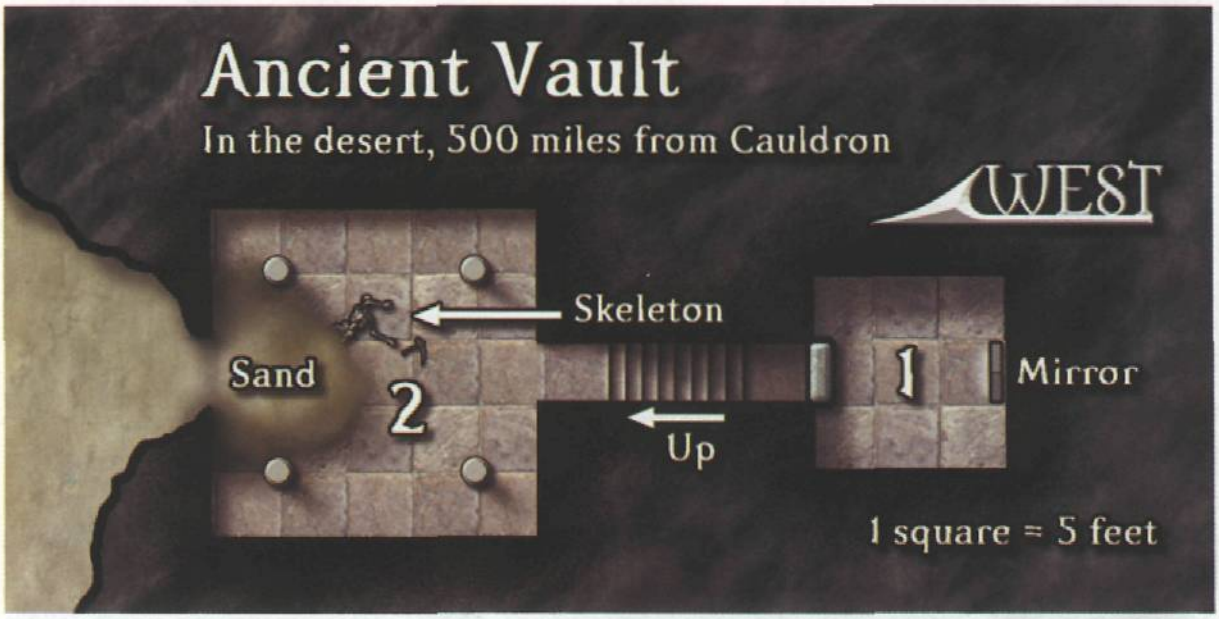
To arrive at the exit *mirror*, the heroes must interpret the string of numbers from the hegemonic plate (3, 4, 5, 1, 2, 3) and turn it into a combination of colors. To do this, they must compare the numbers with the color diagram on the floor of area **V15**. For example, if a PC is in a yellow room and the next number of the sequence is 4, he must enter in the room with the fourth color in a clockwise order from yellow, which is red. When a PC enters the *Starry Mirror*, the color of the first room is determined randomly with a six-sided die. Characters grow hungry and thirsty normally in the mirror maze, so if they don't stumble on the exit, starvation eventually sets in. Time passes normally in the mirror maze as well, and although the environs are alien, there is no danger of encountering dangerous natives in this maze since each room duplicates for every creature in the maze. The portals between chambers should be treated as solid barriers for determining line of effect; spells cannot be cast through a portal as a result.

Certain divination spells can also aid in navigating the mirror maze. *Augury* spells can indicate if a portal choice is the correct one (weal) or an incorrect one (woe). *Commune* and *contact other plane* can provide the caster with the exact pattern required to exit the mirrors, providing the right questions are asked. *Divination* causes the image from the front of the hegemonic plate to appear in the caster's mind, with the six numbers glowing in the appropriate colors needed to navigate the maze. *Locate creature* and *locate object* both fail if used to locate Alek or any of his equipment, since they are 500 miles away from Vaprak's Voice. *Find the path*, although likely beyond the reach of most characters of this level, is the best spell for the situation since it gives the exact route through the mirrors to reach Alek.

Once a PC traverses the six portals in the correct order, the final room grows dark, illuminated only by dim light streaming in from the five portals on the walls. All five portals now show one scene; area **A1** of the ancient vault. Characters who look through the portals at this time see Alek Tercival sitting on the ground of a dark, windowless room lit only by the faint light of his glowing sword. A large slab of stone blocks an archway nearby, and Alek looks sunk in despair.

THE ANCIENT VAULT

The spell weavers of Vaprak's Voice used the *Starry Mirror* to *mirror jump* between five fixed destinations in their ancient empire. Each of these destination points contained a *mirror* that served as a focus; travel via the *Starry Mirror* provides a one-way trip. Currently, only one of these destination *mirrors* remains active, and even then, it is only partly functional. This *mirror* is located in an ancient spell weaver vault. The vault survived the ages mostly intact due to its exceptionally sturdy construction,



and is located in a desert, 500 miles north of Cauldron, half buried in a windswept dune of sand.

A1. UNDERGROUND CHAMBER (EL 6)

Light: Dim light from Alek Tercival's sword (equivalent to torchlight).

Sound: None.

Reaction: None.

Auras: Strong (one-way portal mirror on the south wall, DC 21, transmutation), faint (Alek's cloak, DC 20, abjuration), faint (Alek's ring, DC 20, conjuration), faint (Alek's armor, DC 18, transmutation), moderate (Alek's sword, DC 22, evocation [good]); strong good (Alek Tercival).

> A pentagonal, 5-foot-wide mirror is set into a wall of this squre room. Twelve 7-foot-tall clay urns stand against the walls to either side, and an iron door, its face covered with countless scratches and chips, blocks an 8-foot-tall archway in the wall opposite the mirror.

This room was once a vault used to store magic items. These items have long since been looted, and even the clay urns are completely empty. The magic that once provided light to this room and allowed the door to open at the approach of an intelligent creature have both failed. The pentagonal mirror on the south wall is a one-way portal; while it radiates magic, it cannot be used to re-enter the mirror maze or return to Vaprak's Voice.

The scratches on the iron door are from Alek's hopeless attempt to hack down the door with his sword. The door itself does not form an air-tight seal; creatures that can assume gaseous form can pass through the cracks around the door with ease.

Large Iron Door: 2 in. thick; Hardness 10; hp 60; Break DC 28.

Creature: When the heroes arrive, Alek Tercival slumps near the iron door he's been trying to batter down and force open for the past few days. Now that the effects of the *Amaranth Elixir* have left him, he simply isn't strong enough to force open or batter down the door. His *ring of sustenance* keeps him alive, but frustration and fear have started to take their toll and erode at his already unstable sanity.

ALEK'S PROPHECIES

Alek's insanity has granted him the gift of prophecy. Although the vast majority of his prophecies are little more than insane ravings, a few of them are actually legitimate. Listed here are eight sample prophecies he can cry out during the climactic battle with Nabthatoron; you can use them as guides if you need to invent more prophecies. Some of these prophecies may provide hints as to what may come in future Adventure Path installments, while others are merely insane rants.

d8	Prophecy
1	"When the final cage is shackled the burning doom shall rise."
2	"The baboons watch and wait, patient and potent, for their empire to reign anew."
3	"When thrice by thrice the ancient judgment falls, thunder strikes anew from Jarl Khurok's halls."
4	"Seven blackbirds have ye, yet death is not deceived."
5	"The Striders wander, their history true, yet with each step they grow more cruel."
6	"Chant a dirge of gold coins, your pockets fill with lies."
7	"Magic and death soon play their hand from windows on high above the land."
8	"Beware the unseen mark! Beware the eyes that kill! By treachery and deceit shall the true Lord fall and the false Lord rule!"

Alek believes that the powers of good (the "trumpet archons" and their "heavenly potion") have abandoned him for failing to save Cauldron. His red eyes show that he has been weeping for a while, and the bleeding blisters on his hands testify to his frantic attempts to escape the chamber. Alek's despair is so great that when the characters arrive in his chamber, he barely acknowledges their arrival. Alek's insanity causes him a –2 penalty on all attack rolls, skill checks, and saving throws. Worse, he has come to believe that the insane thoughts that now race through his fractured mind are in fact prophecies granted to him from his days spent wandering in the depths of the Starry Mirror. This insanity also confers a –6 penalty to his Wisdom score as long as it persists. Spells like *bless* or *prayer* can offset this penalty, but actually curing his insanity (and Wisdom penalty) requires a *heal* or *greater restoration* spell.

Alek Tercival, Male Human Ari5/Pal4: CR 8; Medium humanoid; HD 5d8+4d10+9; hp 58; Init +1; Spd 20 ft. (30 ft. base); AC 20 (+1 Dex, +6 masterwork banded mail, +2 masterwork large shield), touch 11, flat-footed 19; Base Atk +7; Grap +8; Atk +10 melee (1d8+2/19–20, *+1 holy longsword*) or +8 ranged (1d8+2/×3, composite longbow); Full Atk +10/+5 melee (1d8+2/19–20, *+1 holy longsword*) or +8/+3 ranged (1d8+2/×3, composite longbow); SA smite evil 1/day, turn undead; SQ aura of courage, aura of good, *detect evil*, divine grace, divine health, lay on hands (8 hp/day); AL LG; SV Fort +6, Ref +3, Will +3; Str 12, Dex 13, Con 12, Int 13, Wis 6, Cha 15.

Skills: Bluff +10, Diplomacy +18, Disguise +2 (+4 acting), Gather Information +10, Handle Animal +6, Intimidate +4, Knowledge (nobility and royalty) +7, Knowledge (religion) +7, Listen +2, Ride +11, Spot +2, Swim +5.

Feats: Combat Expertise, Improved Disarm, Mounted Combat, Ride-By Attack, Weapon Focus (longsword).

Languages: Common, Gnome.

Possessions: *+1 holy longsword* (light generator), *+1 banded mail*, masterwork large metal shield (with St. Cuthbert's symbol), composite longbow (Strength bonus +2), 20 arrows, *cloak of resistance +1*, *ring of sustenance*, 12 gp in belt pouch.

Development: Alek's current attitude toward the PCs is effectively indifferent; he remains non-responsive until his attitude is adjusted to helpful. Until he's coaxed out of his depression (with Diplomacy checks, Intimidate checks, or magic), he remains despondent, muttering prophecy #1 (see the "Alek's Prophecies" sidebar) over and over under his breath. A successful Listen check (DC 15) allows a character to hear this whispered prophecy. If he is brought to his senses, he stops muttering and provides what assistance he can. He is willing to relate the events of his past few months if asked, but he still believes that the fey hags were trumpet archons and that he has somehow failed the cause of good. If the PCs update Alek on the recent events in Cauldron and reveal that the "archons" were in fact half-fey green hags, he becomes very ashamed and very angry. He asks the PCs a lot of questions to learn as much as possible about what he missed. He agrees that his challenge to Terseon Skellerang must be withdrawn publicly to avoid what would be a disastrous conflict between Cauldron and Redgorge. Despite this, his despair and shame is such that he refuses to return to Cauldron and face the results of his actions, despite arguments to the contrary.

A2) ENTRANCE ROOM

Light: Dim light from outside (daylight).
Sound: Desert wind from outside (automatic).
Reaction: None.
Auras: None.

> Four pillars support the ceiling of this square room. Along one wall an arcade allows access to the outside, its opening partially choked by sand. The sand has spread into the room, covering half of the floor. A human skeleton juts out of the heap of sand in the middle of the room, an iron pickaxe lying on the ground near its outstretched arm.

The arcade opens out into a massive desert some 500 miles to the north of Cauldron. The skeleton on the ground is human, all of its valuable gear having long since been looted. The pickaxe is unremarkable.

NABTHATORON'S RAGE (EL 14)

At some point after the PCs arrive in the ancient vault, Nabthatoron takes matters into his own hands. The glabrezu isn't about to let the heroes save Alek and possibly undo all the work he's done to get Skellerang to march on Cauldron. He's been *scrying* on Alek for some time, using a *crystal ball* back in his lair in the Demonskar, and happens to be watching when the PCs arrive on the scene. He quickly gathers his resources, and then at an opportune moment, he uses *greater teleport* to travel to Alek's side.

You should time Nabthatoron's arrival to be as dramatic as possible at some point before the heroes leave the ancient deposit but after they have had a chance to speak with Alek. The glabrezu appears from nothingness with a roar, crying out, "You shall not save your friend, mortals! This time of peace is at an end!"

Creature: Nabthatoron poses a terrible threat to the party, and it is very likely that Alek (and possibly some of the PCs) will be slain in this final encounter. Ideally, the PCs shouldn't be faced with this encounter unless they are fully healed and rested, with all of their spells prepared for the day. If this isn't the case, you can have Nidrama appear to aid the PCs in their battle against the glabrezu. Since this takes some of the glory away from the players, though, you should avoid introducing this *deus ex machina* until the last possible moment.

Nabthatoron, male glabrezu: CR 14, hp 174, see *Monster Manual* 43. *Note:* Since he is exiled from his home plane, Nabthatoron cannot use his *summon tanar'ri* spell-like ability.

Tactics: When Nabthatoron appears, Alek's insanity intensifies. Filled with rage at the sight of the demon, he draws his weapon and fights with a primal frenzy. As he does, he spews out prophecy after prophecy at the top of his lungs. The "Alek's Prophecies" sidebar lists numerous sample prophecies he can utter during this combat.

Nabthatoron focuses his initial attacks on Alek Tercival, and tries to slaughter the paladin with his melee attacks as quickly as possible. If the PCs manage to cause the demon significant harm (more than 15 points of damage with a single attack), he takes the time to use *power word stun*, *confusion*, or *reverse gravity* to take them out of the combat so he can return to savaging Alek. If a PC seems to be getting through his damage reduction with ease, Nabthatoron uses *mirror image* and switches his full attention to that character. Otherwise, only when Alek is dead does the glabrezu turn his wrath fully on the PCs. If seriously threatened (brought down to less than 30 hit points), he teleports back to his lair in the Demonskar to plot revenge against the PCs.

CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

If he has not already been slain, Alek Tercival collapses to the ground as soon as the PCs defeat Nabthatoron. In any case, Alek frantically motions for the PCs to draw near, his eyes wild and blood frothing at his lips. Assuming he was slain by Nabthatoron, the PCs should be shocked to see that the paladin still lives, despite wounds that should have left him quite dead.

As the PCs reach him, Alek grabs onto one of their arms or legs and looks deep into that character's eyes. He suddenly grows calm and a terrible aura of doom settles over the characters as a voice, not his own, issues from his gaping jaw:

> "There is naught left for you in Cauldron, heroes! To return is to enter your own graves and to bring doom upon all you love! *Seek the sign of the Smoking Eye if you wish to save them all!*"

With this cryptic and final prophecy, Alek dies. If he had not suffered mortal wounds in the battle, his death should be mysterious; if he was fatally wounded in the battle, the fact that he stayed alive long enough to deliver these final words should be even more mysterious. In any case, the characters may well now be stranded in the middle of an unknown desert, 500 miles from their homes and without any way to stop Terseon Skellerang from marching upon Redgorge. The heroes may possess methods of contacting allies in the Cauldron region, and might even be able to *teleport* back to the city (or use similar methods of magic travel to return); but you should nonetheless end the session here, with Alek's final prophecy. The next installment of the Shackled City Adventure Path begins here, with the PCs looking out across the wasteland, the final prophecy weighing upon their minds. This adventure will appear soon in a future issue of DUNGEON *Magazine*.

APPENDIX I: NEW PRESTIGE CLASS HIGH HANDCRAFTER

The so-called high handcrafters are the leadership of the Chisel, the secret organization inspired by the ancient hero Surabar Spellmason. Although all high handcrafters recognize the authority of the Foreman as main leader of the organization, the Chisel promotes freedom of thought and responsible action among all its members. According to this philosophy all the high handcrafters, including the Foreman, consider themselves peers. Less than a dozen high handcrafters are known to exist, and new ones are appointed exclusively in a mysterious hideout known as the Hall of Carvings, near the village of Redgorge.

The Chisel considers excellency in any kind of craft a way to achieve a superior state of efficiency and morality. High handcrafters are expected to be intelligent, able and versatile artisans more than powerful adventurers. Following the philosophy of excellency and responsibility in a man's actions, the high handcrafters gain substantial benefits, which affect their other classes as well. Moreover, the high handcrafters gain access to the Hall of Carvings and the unconditioned support of their peers. *High handcrafters can come from any background, and* the expert NPC class is frequently found among them.

Hit Dice: d6.

REQUIREMENTS

To qualify to become a high handcrafter, a character must fulfill the following criteria.

Alignment: Any good.

Craft (any 2): 10 ranks in one Craft skill, 6 ranks in a second Craft skill.

Knowledge (architecture and engineering): 5 ranks.

Knowledge (the planes): 5 ranks.

Feats: Skill Focus in both of the Craft skills used to meet the Craft requirement.

Languages: Terran.

Special: *Must be sponsored by an active member of the* Chisel, who must lead the aspiring character to the Hall of Carvings in Redgorge to meditate before the Earth Pool for an hour.

CLASS SKILLS

The high handcrafter's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Craft (any) (Int), Knowledge (architecture and engineering), Knowledge (history) (Int), Knowledge (the planes) (Int), and Profession (Wis). Additionally, his exceptional dedication and versatility allows him to choose six additional skills as high handcrafter class skills. See Chapter 4: Skills in the *Player's Handbook* for skill descriptions.

Skill Points at Each Level: 6 + Int modifier.

CLASS FEATURES

All of the following are class features of the high handcrafter prestige class:

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: A high handcrafter is proficient with all simple weapons and light armor.

Improved Skill Focus (Ex): When a high handcrafter takes the Skill Focus feat, he gains a +4 bonus to the selected skill rather than a +3 bonus. At 5th level, this bonus increases to +5, and at 9th level it increases to +6.

Planned Save (Ex): A high handcrafter gains a +1 bonus on saving throws made against something expected. For example, if a high handcrafter makes a Spellcraft check to identify a spell as it is being cast, he gains the bonus to his save against it. The

same bonus applies when the high handcrafter is doing an obviously dangerous task, such as opening a nasty-looking treasure chest. He also gains the bonus against monster special attacks he understands and expects. If a high handcrafter were fighting a medusa, he'd get his planned save bonus against her gaze attack. At higher levels, the bonus for a planned save becomes +2 (at 4th level) and +3 (at 8th level).

Rebuke/Command Earth (Su): At 2nd level, the high handcrafter gains the ability to rebuke or command earth creatures as a cleric of level equal to his high handcrafter level (times per day equal to 3 plus Charisma modifier). If he possesses this ability from any other class levels (such as by having cleric levels and access to the Earth domain) his high handcrafter levels stack with that class for the purposes of determining the effects of this ability.

Craft *Earth Talisman* (Su): At 3rd level, the high handcrafter gains the ability to craft an earth talisman and infuse it with magic channeled from the Plane of Earth. Crafting an *earth talisman* is treated similarly to the procedure for crafting a wondrous item. Creating the *talisman* requires three days of work, and the high handcrafter must spend 100 experience points and 1,400 gp in raw materials. The cost in experience points and gold to craft an *earth talisman* is approximately 30% less than the cost required to make an identical item with Craft Wondrous Item, since only the creator can use the item in question.

When the high handcrafter completes the construction, he selects two of the following spells: *heat metal, make whole, resist energy, shatter, soften earth and stone,* or *wood shape.* From this point on, he may use the *earth talisman* to cast each of these spells at a caster level equal to his high handcrafter level, once per day each. The *talisman* itself appears as a small chisel, often worn on the neck on a fine chain. It does not take up a body slot, though, and the talisman must be firmly grasped in one hand to activate one of its powers.

An *earth talisman* functions only for the high handcrafter who made it. A high handcrafter can only have one talisman at a time; if he wants to change the talisman's abilities, he must destroy his current *talisman* and start anew.

Improved *Earth Talisman* (Su): At 6th level, the high handcrafter can improve his *earth talisman.* This requires 30 days of work and the expenditure of 1,000 experience points and 15,000 gp in raw materials.

When the high handcrafter completes the construction, he adds two of the following spells to the list of spells he can cast using his *earth talisman: fabricate, lesser planar binding* (creatures with the earth subtype only), *major creation, transmute mud to rock, transmute rock to mud, wall of stone.* Each of these spells may be cast once per day.

An *improved earth talisman* grants its wearer a +2 competence bonus to all Craft checks.

***Summon Earth Elemental* (Sp)**: At 7th level, a high handcrafter gains the spell-like ability to summon one of the following monsters as if he were casting *summon monster VIII*: one greater earth elemental, 1d3 Huge earth elementals, or 1d4+1 large earth elementals.

Superior Earth Talisman: At 10th level, the high handcrafter can enhance his *improved earth talisman.* This requires 60 days of work and the expenditure of 2,500 experience points and 30,000 gp in raw materials.

When the high handcrafter completes the construction, he adds one of the following spells to the list of spells he can cast using his *earth talisman: earthquake, greater planar binding* (creatures with the earth subtype only), *iron body, polymorph any object, repel metal or stone.* This spell may be cast once per day.

An *improved earth talisman* grants its wearer a +1 luck bonus on saving throws, ability checks, and skill checks.

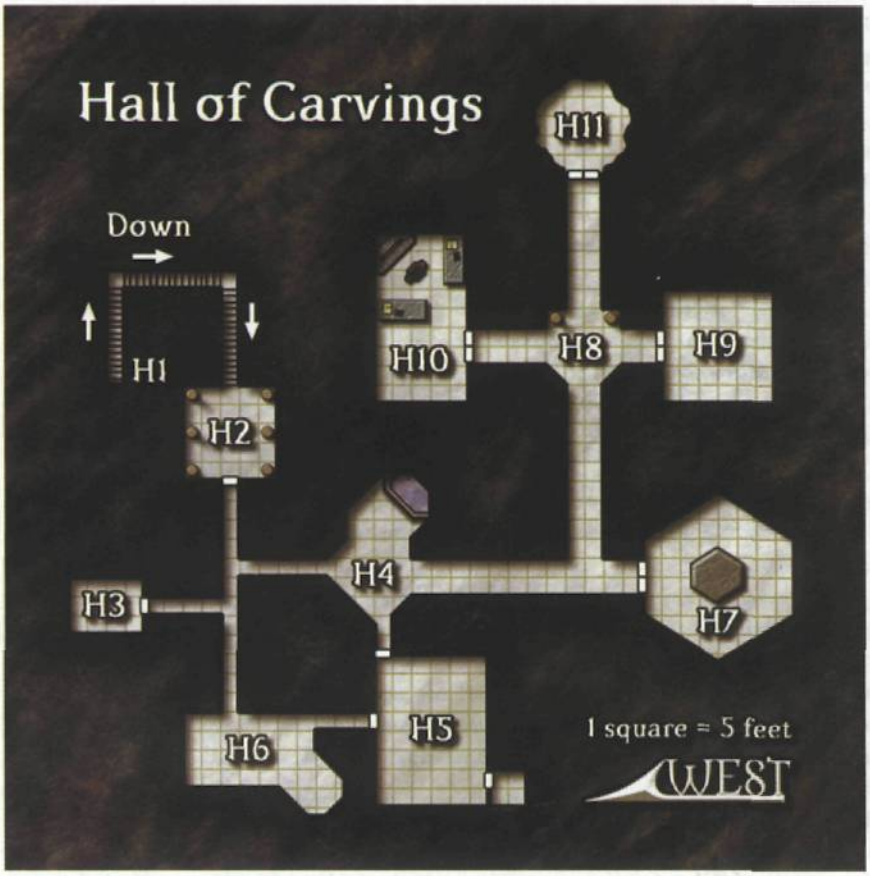
The High Handcrafter

Class Level	Base Atk	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special
1st	+0	+2	+0	+2	Improved Skill Focus +4, planned save +1
2nd	+1	+3	+0	+3	Rebuke/command earth
3th	+2	+3	+1	+3	Craft *earth talisman*
4th	+3	+4	+1	+4	Planned save +2
5th	+3	+4	+1	+4	Improved Skill Focus +5
6th	+4	+5	+2	+5	Improved *earth talisman*
7th	+5	+5	+2	+5	*Summon earth elemental*
8th	+6	+6	+2	+6	Planned save +3
9th	+6	+6	+3	+6	Improved Skill Focus +6
10th	+7	+7	+3	+7	Superior *earth talisman*

APPENDIX II: THE HALL OF CARVINGS

Aside from the private room under the Redhead Miner's Inn, the Chisel has a much more secret and impressive hideout in Redgorge. The Hall of Carvings is the historical base of the Chisel and a periodic meeting place for its most important members. Surabar Spellmason built the hall and created several wards and guardians to protect it. The Hall of Carvings is accessible only to those who have earned the absolute trust of the Foreman and profess an interest in joining the Chisel. Characters with at least one level of high handcrafter are also allowed into the Hall of Carvings.

The Hall of Carvings takes its name from the abstract sculptural decoration of its vertical walls, which are made of light gray, beautifully veined marble. The pavements and the domed ceilings, which are 20 feet high, are completely smooth. The doors are made of slabs of stone, but open smoothly and easily at a touch. Crystal lamps containing *continual flames* illuminate



the complex. A system of cleverly hidden ducts conveys air from the surface and drinking water from a nearby subterranean stream.

H1. ENTRANCE

The flagstone floors of an abandoned cellar above hide this long stairway. These slabs are attuned to a secret Terran rhyme. When the rhyme is properly performed in Terran (Perform-sing check, DC 15), the slabs vibrate and gradually become insubstantial, eventually rising up in the air and opening the entrance. The slabs return to their original position after a minute. The same song can be sung from below to open the slabs to allow exit from the Halls.

H2. SURABAR'S DAUGHTERS

This atrium is flanked on both sides by two rows of three smooth pillars. These pillars are caryatid columns created by Surabar Spellmason. The caryatids attack anyone who does not address them properly in Terran as they enter the room. The password is: "Stand easy and rest well!" They also fight when so directed by the Foreman of the Chisel.

Caryatid Columns (6): CR 6; Medium Construct; HD 6d10+20; hp 53; Init +3; Spd 30 ft.; AC 22 (+3 Dex, +9 natural), touch 13, flat-footed 19; Base Atk +4; Grap +9; Atk +12 melee (1d10+9, +2 *bastard sword*); SQ break weapon, column form, construct traits, hardness 8, magic weapon; AL N; SV Fort +2, Ref +5, Will –3; Str 20, Dex 16, Con —, Int 6, Wis 1, Cha 1.

Skills: Diplomacy –3, Sense Motive +4.

Feats: Improved Sunder, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (bastard sword).

Break Weapon (Su): Any melee weapon or magical ranged weapon striking a caryatid column must make a Fortitude save (DC 13) or shatter without effect. Nonmagical missiles shatter automatically.

Column Form (Ex): When at rest, a caryatid columns looks like an ordinary pillar and does not radiate magic.

Magic Weapon: A caryatid column's +2 *bastard sword* merges with it in its column form. If taken from the caryatid's hands, the weapon reverts to a nonmagical, useless stone form.

H3. WAREHOUSE

This room is well supplied with food, wine, consumables, spare parts, and firewood for the entire complex. The total value of the supplies here is 2,000 gp.

H4. FOUNTAIN

A beautifully carved fountain sits against the north wall of this room. An underground stream feeds the fountain from below, providing the Hall of Carvings with drinkable water.

H5. DINING ROOM

A large dining table and twelve chairs sit in the western part of the room. In the eastern part is a small kitchen.

H6. GUEST ROOM

This room is furnished with top quality beds and lockers, and can accommodate up to twelve people.

H7. CHAPTER HOUSE

This 30-foot-high hexagonal room's walls are dotted with a total of forty niches (five per wall, excluding the entrance side). Twenty-nine niches accommodate the bust of a man or half-elf, and the others are empty. The busts represent the previous Foremen of the Chisel, starting from Surabar Spellmason, whose sculptural portrait can be seen on the first niche set in the southwestern wall. A frieze of bas-reliefs at the base of the domed ceiling represents the same six episodes of Surabar's life depicted in the frescoes of the private tavern in the Redhead Miner's Inn.

A hexagonal stone table with twelve chairs sits in the middle of the room. Every season the top-ranking members of the Chisel hold meetings here.

H8. GUARDROOM

This room is guarded by two stone golems created by Surabar Spellmason. The golems look like massive and muscular construction workers. Like the caryatid columns in area **H2**, the golems attack whoever fails to give a password in Terran ("Break time, gentlemen!"). The golems also activate under the direction of the Foreman.

Stone Golems (2): hp 77 each, *Monster Manual* 136.

H9. LIBRARY

Lined with wooden shelving and furnished with benches and a prominent lectern, this library contains many books about alchemy, sculpture, architecture, and engineering. The formal logs of previous Foremen can be found here, the oldest of which is four centuries old. Most of them are written in Terran. The information in the adventure background concerning the early history of the region can be found here (at your discretion), as can several spellbooks that might contain numerous unique earth spells. The total value of the books here is 30,000 gp.

H10. WORKSHOP

This is an amazingly well-equipped alchemy lab and artisan workshop that has been in use for nearly eight centuries. Several wooden and clay models of creatures, objects and buildings, a few unfinished statues and many strange mechanical devices in various stages of completion clutter the room. A large alchemist's lab and several masterwork artisan's tool sets are arranged on the room's workbenches. The total value of the objects and devices here is 20,000 gp.

H11. DORMANT EARTH POOL

The walls of this chamber are decorated with elaborate, beautiful carvings. Part of the cavern's floor is occupied by what looks like a petrified lava pool, with a flat surface that contrasts neatly with the somewhat uneven ground. From time to time, the pool rumbles and narrow cracks form on its surface. Oddly enough, no heat and smoke issue from it when this happens.

The pool was actually the home of an earth weird befriended by Surabar Spellmason eight centuries ago. The earth weird returned to its native plane seven decades ago. The current Foreman does not know how to call the earth weird back, but is researching this matter on the books in the library (area **H9**). If it is recalled, the earth weird's ability to foretell disasters could reveal the ultimate goal of the Cagewrights as the main threat of the campaign. Ω

After a period of hard work in the tech dept of a factory, Tito Leati proudly earned his first level in the high handcrafter prestige class.

SCALING THE ADVENTURE

"The Demonskar Legacy" is designed for a group of four 8th-level PCs, but with a little work it can be adapted for use by 6th–7th- or 9th–10th-level characters. If an encounter proves to be too difficult for the characters, you can provide them assistance with a timely intervention by the high handcrafters or have Nidrama appear to help them. This should be a last resort, of course, since it steals the thunder from the players.

For lower-level characters, the easiest way to make the adventure less deadly is to adjust the class levels possessed by specific enemies downward. Specific suggestions follow:

The Cauldron Tax Riot: Replace the breathdrinker with a belker or a large air elemental.

A Fire in the Night: Replace the Huge fire elementals with Large fire elementals.

The Headless Demon: Reduce the number of gnoll hunters to 4.

The Old Ogre's Home: Replace the forest sloth with a dire tiger.

Vaprak's Voice: Reduce the total number of hill giants in Vaprak's Voice from four to two. Replace the ettins with minotaurs. Remove all of Dugobras' expert levels. Reduce the damage done by the explosive vapor trap in area **V12** to 6d6 fire damage. Remove the rogue levels from the half-fey green hags. Remove one or two of the spell weaver skeletons.

Nabthatoron's Rage: Change Nabthatoron into a hezrou.

For higher-level characters, you can make the adventure more difficult by simply reducing the amount of time the characters have to rest and recuperate between encounters. Characters who try to rest in Vaprak's Voice might be hounded by additional giants, and Nabthatoron could even send squads of demons out to ambush them as they rest. Specific suggestions for changes follow:

The Cauldron Tax Riot: Advance the breathdrinker's hit dice by four; note that this changes its size to Large (and increases its statistics appropriately).

A Fire in the Night: Replace the Huge fire elementals with greater fire elementals.

The Headless Demon: The gnoll hunters should be led by a gnoll Clr9.

Vaprak's Voice: Give Kymzo four levels of rogue. Replace the hill giants with chaotic evil stone giants, and the ettins with hill giants. Give Dugobras two levels of ranger or fighter. All traps that do damage should have their damage values increased by 4d6. Give the half-fey hags and Gaflon two more rogue levels each. Make the spell weaver skeletons into zombies. Give two to three levels of fighter to the kalareem nerra.

Nabthatoron's Rage: Nabthatoron himself should remain a challenge for even 11th-level characters, but you might consider adding one or two babau demons as minions of the glabrezu that can serve as distractions or bodyguards.

MAP OF MYSTERY by Robert Lazzaretti